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THE TIMES

No. 64,518

THURSDAY DECEMBER 17 1992

45p

Break up of British Gas
demanded by watchdog

More than two million small shareholders who were encouraged to invest in British Gas could be the losers if ministers decide to follow the advice of the regulator and split the company in two

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH Gas, one of the government's most successful privatisations, should be broken up into two companies, according to Sir James McKinnon, the government's own regulator.

Sir James, who has repeatedly clashed with British Gas management, says in a report to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission that the split is essential to ensure effective competition.

The report is certain to provoke a furious reaction today in Whitehall and the City. Shares in British Gas are expected to fall as the City absorbs the significance of Sir James's judgment and the government will be concerned at the effect on its declared intention to encourage wider share ownership. Any split

effective competition is to split the £11.4 billion company. "We do not believe that competition in gas supply will flourish until the transportation and storage business is wholly independent from the British Gas trading business," says the Ofgas report, to be published today.

Dividing the company would be expected to cost perhaps hundreds of millions of pounds. British Gas shares closed down 2p last night at 270p.

Robert Evans, the British Gas chairman, said last night: "While the gas business is under review, it is totally inappropriate for public statements to be made. We shall continue to discuss these matters with the MMC."

If ministers were to reject the regulator's recommendations, contained in evidence to a Monopolies and Mergers Commission enquiry into the gas market, the government's commitment to market forces would come under attack.

In its own submissions to the enquiry, British Gas still rejects the idea of a break up. But, after pressure from Ofgas, the company has already begun to develop a system of separate accounting for its transmission business. Sir James maintains that this is not enough to resolve the conflict between the company's role as a supplier and as a carrier, delivering gas supplies to businesses on behalf of rivals.

He believes the conflict of interest is becoming increasingly critical as British Gas's share of the gas market is eroded. Helped by Ofgas, some 30 rival suppliers, including many international oil companies, are now selling directly to commercial and industrial companies in Britain and, in time, households might be able to choose a supplier.

Despite the small fall in the British Gas share price yesterday, shareholders have seen their investment double from a price of 135p when the issue was launched in 1986.

Comment, page 23



Brave smiles: Norma Major with two winners of Children of Courage awards at Westminster Abbey. Nicholas Killen, 7, left, was blinded by cancer and Daniel Churchill, 5, has a heart complaint. Page 3

Thousands
evacuated as
bombs shut
Oxford St

By STEWART TENDLER AND PETER VICTOR

THE IRA again struck in the heart of London's West End yesterday, planting two bombs among thousands of Christmas shoppers in Oxford Street. Four people are believed to have been injured. Police said that the IRA was playing "an obnoxious game" by telephoning warnings that were deliberately inaccurate.

The attacks were launched on the day that Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland secretary, made a fresh plea for an end to the violence. In a moderately worded speech at the University of Ulster, Sir Patrick said that if Britain took a unilateral decision to leave Northern Ireland, the province might one day face the fate of Yugoslavia. He said that the Yugoslav tragedy had "created a fresh understanding here that 'Bris out' means the ethnic cleansing of one million human beings".

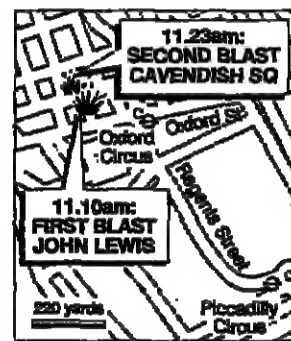
The first Oxford Street bomb, containing about a pound of explosive, detonated in the third-floor gentlemen's lavatory of the John Lewis department store at 11.10am. While police were clearing the store, a second device exploded in a wheeled rubbish bin in Cavendish Square, immediately behind the store.

Commander David Tucker, head of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch, said that three coded messages had been received, warning of a device in a store in Oxford Street. "The warnings were for one device and there was no mention of John Lewis, or a second device." When one of the telephonists who took the

calls asked if the warning could be more precise, she was told: "That's for you to find out."

The calls, with code words, were made between 10.36 and 10.40 to LBC radio, a travel agent and a newspaper. Mr Tucker said that the caller, who claimed to be from the IRA, said that the bomb was due to go off in 15 minutes. Police had been left with an impossible time scale, he said.

Almost half of Oxford Street and many side streets were closed for nearly four hours at the height of the



working day as police checked for further bombs and evacuated thousands of people. Mr Tucker urged shoppers to ignore the bombers' attempts to disrupt commercial life.

Bill Melly, of the Oxford Street Traders' Association, said later that the bombings would mean heavy financial losses. "I hope people won't be frightened," he said. "I think that the public gets cross when people try to frighten them and they will just say: 'Stuff it. I'm going shopping.'"

Mayhew warning, page 3



may conflict with the terms of the sale prospectus and damage share values. The company's 2.1 million shareholders might then be persuaded to threaten court action.

Ofgas, the regulatory body, rejects suggestions that its proposals would amount to a breach of faith with shareholders. "We believe that the terms of the offer for sale ceased to have any legal or moral standing several years ago," Ofgas said.

British Gas has always opposed the break up of the industry. Sir Denis Rooke, its formidable preprivatisation chairman, fought the Thatcher government hard to preserve British Gas as a monopoly.

Sir James, head of Ofgas, says the only way to achieve

Washington lists
genocide suspects

By MICHAEL EVANS AND JAMIE DEITMER

LAWRENCE Eagleburger, the US Secretary of State, yesterday came close to naming Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian president, as a war criminal guilty of crimes against humanity.

Speaking in Geneva to the international conference on the former Yugoslavia, he listed seven Serbs suspected of being involved in genocide, including Borislav Herak, who had confessed to killing more than 230 civilians.

However, he said there was also political responsibility for these crimes against humanity. Mr Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic, the self-declared president of the Bosnian Serb republic, and General Ratko Mladic, commander of the Serb forces in Bosnia, should eventually explain, if charged with war crimes, what action they took "to prevent and punish the atrocities".

There was a call for setting up an international war crimes tribunal. Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, said he agreed. Among the crimes listed by Mr Eagle-

burger were the siege of Sarajevo, in which scores of civilians were killed nearly every day by artillery shells.

Mr Eagleburger's challenge to the Serbian leadership came as voices were raised during the conference to lift the UN arms ban to help the Muslims and to enforce the "no-fly" zone.

Mr Eagleburger, who said Washington supported both moves, accused the Serbian leaders of being reckless and breaking all agreements. The international community must contemplate "more aggressive measures", he said. Mr Hurd remained opposed, however, to lifting the arms embargo and raised doubts about the practicalities of enforcing the "no-fly" zone.

John Major will consult his cabinet colleagues over the war today, only hours before flying to America and talks with President Bush about the bloodshed.

Noose tightens, page 10
Rape victim's story, page 12
Leading article, page 15

Britain
loses 7,000
more jobsBy PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITAIN lost another 7,000 jobs yesterday when Ford, the motor manufacturer, and Birmingham city council announced large-scale redundancies. The moves came on the eve of fresh figures to be published today that will show an increase of some 30,000 in the number out of work, taking seasonally-adjusted unemployment to close to 2.9 million.

As part of Europe-wide job cuts of 10,000, Ford yesterday said that almost 4,200 jobs will go in the UK. In what is likely to be the first of a series of announcements from local authorities as they prepare their budgets for next year, Birmingham said that it is cutting 3,000 jobs to save £40 million. Trade unions in the UK warned that they would ballot their members on industrial action if Ford tried to make any of the redundancies compulsory.

Details, page 2
Jobs boost, page 19

BCCI chief will
be extradited

By ANGELA MACKAY AND CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

THE British investigation into the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International has taken a significant step forward with the French decision to extradite Syed Ziauddin Ali Akbar, the driving force behind BCCI's operation in Britain. The Times has learned that the justice ministry in Paris made a decision to send him to Britain rather than to America, where he is also wanted.

The formal signing of the extradition decree by Michel Vauzelle, the French minister of justice, and Pierre Bérégovoy, the prime minister, is expected to take place before the end of the month. Serious Fraud Office officials are delighted by the decision, but will say only that nothing has been completed and will not be until the decree is signed. They are extremely concerned that any comment might prejudice the final moves.

However, Mr Akbar's extradition marks a watershed in the investigation which began 18 months ago, when BCCI collapsed and several billion

dollars were found to be missing. It is the largest banking fraud in history. The SFO is estimated to have spent £10 million so far, but has charged only three other people.

The SFO has been criticised for not acting quickly enough to prevent several key figures leaving Britain. They have gone mainly to Pakistan, which does not have an extradition treaty with Britain, and to Abu Dhabi, where the government has detained 18 executives including two chief executives of the bank. The Abu Dhabi government is the biggest shareholder.

The BCCI Group was founded in 1972 by Agha Hasan Abedi with capital mainly obtained from Arab investors. Mr Akbar was the treasurer of the bank in London between 1979 and 1984 but did not leave BCCI until 1986. He is now in prison at Longuevenne, near Calais, where he was arrested earlier this year at the request of the Americans.

Fraud Office wins, page 5

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£1m-a-week jackpot offered in reform of gambling rules

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A WEEKLY £1 million jackpot prize will be offered as bait to buyers of national lottery tickets under the government scheme to be unveiled by Peter Brooke, the national heritage secretary, today.

In addition to the big "lotto" prizes, the public will be able to buy scratch cards for as little as 50p with the chance of winning smaller instant prizes.

A bill published today will relax regulations on lotteries and competitions run by charities as a concession by Mr Brooke to voluntary bodies, which fear they will lose out to the national lottery.

Mr Brooke will announce restrictions on the sort of games run under the national lottery so that people are tempted to have "a bit of fun"

without risking becoming addicted to gambling. For instance, the bodies running the lottery will not be allowed to run accumulative games, such as one-armed bandits.

The lottery, scheduled to start in 1994, is expected to raise £2 billion a year initially, possibly rising to £3 billion, for sport, the arts, heritage and charitable causes. Although the bill will not spell out details of games, it will set the framework for running the lottery and distributing profits.

Two key issues have not yet been settled. Mr Brooke will test the mood of MPs before deciding what action, if any, to take to appease the pools industry, which predicts that it will lose £40 million and thousands of jobs to the lot-

tery. He is not convinced that pools supporters will switch en masse to buying lottery tickets, but he is likely to relax regulations on advertising and selling pools coupons.

Mr Brooke and the Treasury have not settled the rate of tax to be levied on lottery, although negotiators talk of between 10 and 20 per cent.

Robert Key, the junior minister, has been at pains to placate charities by promising that they stand to gain from the lottery. He made clear to them recently that the fundamental principle behind the lottery is to add to the pot of money available to improving the quality of life of the nation and which goes towards giving people a sense of national identity and national pride.

The bill is expected to be fought bitterly in the Commons and the Lords by those disliking state-operated gambling or worried about the fate of the pools industry.

□ Economists and politicians are looking to the Irish lottery as a potential model for the UK (Alison Roberts writes).

Since its launch in 1987, the Irish lottery has raised £550 million for good causes. Its sophisticated computer system allows competitors to buy a ticket at 7.45pm and watch the draw on television at 8.05pm, adding to excitement. In France and Italy, most of the lottery money goes straight to the national treasury.

Europe rules that Sunday laws stand

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

KENNETH Clarke faced pressure from MPs of all parties last night to clear up the chaos in the Sunday trading laws after the European Court ruled that Britain's antiquated laws banning most Sunday shopping can stand.

Senior ministers hope that yesterday's ruling, which means that councils can continue to prosecute, will mean that the home secretary's promised legislation can be speeded up.

Mr Clarke, who favours complete liberalisation of the law, is to table three possible legislative options for change, and allow MPs to decide which one to go for in a free vote. They are: complete deregulation, as in Scotland; wide deregulation as favoured by the Shopping Hours Reform Council; and limited change favoured by the Keep Sunday Special Campaign.

Ministers reacted cautiously to the ruling. The Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, set out the legal position that cases can proceed and summonses be issued. But he and

other ministers declined to exert traders to observe the law. He told MPs in a written reply: "I have considered whether I should also take action to enforce the law but I have decided that the public interest does not require intervention by me at present."

James Coughman, Tory MP for Gillingham, who is a leading campaigner for reform, said last night that Sunday shopping had become a normal British weekend activity. "The sooner we have a sensible law which reflects this, the better," he said.

Mr Coughman has tabled a bill allowing all-day opening for shops under 3,000 sq ft, with larger stores able to trade for part of the day. He said: "As a piece of legislation, the 1950 Shops Act is far from satisfactory. It is unworkable and unpopular and should be reformed."

Mr Clarke has been waiting for the ruling before pressing on with his bill. Colleagues believe that he will be pressed for it to come in as early as possible.



Limelight: Sir Richard Attenborough, director of *Chaplin*, chosen for the 1992 royal film performance last night, poses with the statue of the little tramp. Review, page 27

Ford to shed a further 4,200 jobs

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

FORD led a new round of job cuts in Britain yesterday as it announced that almost 4,200 jobs are to go. At the same time, Birmingham city council said it was cutting 3,000 jobs to stay within government financial guidelines.

Both sets of job losses came as the government readied itself to announce today a further increase in overall unemployment. New figures to be disclosed this morning are expected by City analysts to

add a further 30,000 to the number out of work, although today's figures will not include any of the recent large-scale job losses announced in the past few weeks.

Ford said that almost 10,000 jobs — 7,200 blue-collar and more than 2,500 white-collar staff — would go from its plants spread across Europe. Germany will bear the brunt of the losses because of the sharp downturn in car sales there.

John Hougham, Ford personnel director, said that after the redundancies "Ford will be ready to lead this industry out of the recession".

Ford blamed the redundancies largely on falling car sales. The company told trade unions yesterday that it believed the car market in the UK would be "totally flat" next year, with around 1.55 million cars sold. Ford is taking a pessimistic line about car sales across Europe. It is forecasting only 12 million cars sold next year, much lower than most in the industry.

Ford's two biggest British factories at Dagenham in Essex and Halewood on Merseyside will bear the brunt of the cutbacks, which are the third wave of redundancies at the company in the past year. Dagenham will shed 660 staff with up to 520 at Halewood, where there were fears that the plant would be closed entirely. Jim Thomas, national of-

ficer of the MSF technical union said: "Our members are paying the price for a recession they did not create."

In what is likely to be the first of a wave of local authority announcements as they set their budgets for the coming year, Birmingham city council said it would have to cut 3,000 jobs to make savings of £40 million.

The council said it hoped many of the employees likely to be affected would take voluntary redundancy or early retirement, and Sir Richard Knowles, council leader, said he hoped education and front-line council services would be protected from the most severe cuts. He said the government's financial limit on the council, which employs 54,000 full and part-time workers, put it in a "horrendous" position and would mean a cut in services. All job recruitment, except in schools, is being frozen.

Toyota's chairman is backing Britain

By TIM JONES

AS THE first car rolled off the production line at Toyota's new £700 million factory at Burnaston, Derbyshire, yesterday, the chairman of the Japanese car-making company pledged his firm's commitment to Britain as its manufacturing centre for the rest of Europe.

Dr Shoichiro Toyota said the concern expressed by other car companies, including Nissan, about the UK's future in the EC was unfounded. The car industry in Britain had a bright future, he insisted.

Toyota's new factory will produce around 36,000 cars next year, and 100,000 in 1994. The plant is capable of turning out 200,000 vehicles a year if required.

Toyota UK Ltd now employs 1,100 people at Burnaston, between Derby and Burton on Trent, Staffordshire. Another 600 people will be hired by early 1994 and the company plans an

eventual labour force of 3,000. Initially the Burnaston plant will make the Camry E family saloons, three-quarters of them for export.

Engines will be supplied from Toyota's £140 million plant at Deeside, North Wales, which started production in September.

□ Vauxhall's two British plants have hit record production levels this year, the company said yesterday.

At Ellesmere Port, production of the Astra exceeded the previous record of 125,762 vehicles, set in 1990, while production of the Cavalier at Luton production passed the 165,445 mark, the third successive record year.

Vauxhall UK sales were up 6.4 per cent this year but it was exports, which accounted for 36 per cent of total production that "cushioned us from the worst effects of the decline in the domestic market", the company said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Minister says beach verdict is irrelevant

The government yesterday dismissed as an "irrelevant technicality" an opinion from the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg that the bathing waters off Blackpool and Southport do not meet EC health and safety standards. Speaking at a meeting of environment ministers in Brussels, David MacLean, junior environment minister, said the row with Brussels over Blackpool beach was "past history."

Although the opinion of Otto Lenz, the EC advocate-general, is not legally binding, such preliminary judgments of the court are backed up by its final verdicts in two out of three cases. The final judgment will be given early next year. The Commission's case against the government goes back to 1987, when Brussels first objected to the raw sewage being pumped into the sea off Blackpool.

At a preliminary hearing on the case in Luxembourg in October, the government came up with the novel defence that at the time it did not classify Blackpool as a beach. The government argued that for an area of sand to be classified as a beach it needed 500 bathers in the sea at any one time, or a density of 1,500 bathers per mile.

Aids tests increased

Pregnant women attending ante-natal clinics in areas where HIV infection rates are high are to be offered Aids tests. Virginia Bottomley, the health secretary, said. More testing centres are to be set up to improve checks on the progress of the disease. In new guidelines issued to health authorities, Mrs Bottomley said that obtaining an HIV test should be made easier. The tests should be available in health centres and hospital outpatient departments. The guidelines apply mainly to inner London health authorities, where infection rates are highest. HIV-positive rates in some London ante-natal clinics range from one in 1,000 women to one in 200. Tracing partners of those infected is also to be improved.

Police bullies criticised

Detectives who investigated the murder of a Cardiff prostitute were condemned by the Lord Chief Justice yesterday for bullying and hectoring one of the suspects into confessing involvement in the killing. Lord Taylor of Gossforth was giving the Court of Appeal's reasons for freeing last week three men, Stephen Miller, Tony Paris and Yusuf Abdullahi, who were jailed for life for the murder of Lynette White in 1988. Officers of South Wales police were also said to have shouted at the man what they wanted him to say rather than questioning him. A solicitor who was present at some of the interviews had been "gravely at fault" for failing to intervene to protect the interests of his client.

Beatles claim rejected

The three surviving Beatles lost their High Court claim yesterday for ownership of hundreds of photographs taken to produce the cover of the *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album. The court ruled that copyright in 239 pictures belonged not to the Beatles but to the son of the photographer who took them. Apple Corps Ltd, owned jointly by Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Ringo Starr and the estate of John Lennon, had sought a declaration that they owned the copyright of the unused pictures taken by Michael Cooper. Judge Micklethorn ruled that in holding the 239 photos Mr Cooper's son Adam, 29, had not caused any copyright infringement. Leading article, page 15

Killers still free

The killers of a postman shot while on holiday in Florida are still at large, an inquest was told yesterday. Keith Thompson, 42, of Chelmsford, Essex, was murdered in front of his fiancée and two friends when he refused to hand over cash to two muggers in his hotel car park in Orlando. Ann Sole, his fiancée, said that they had booked into the hotel and were unloading their luggage when two black men came out of the shadows brandishing a gun and demanded: "Give us the money." Miss Sole, 34, said: "I saw Keith was angry. He was not aggressive, he just said 'No way.'" Dr Malcolm Weir, the Essex coroner, recorded a verdict of unlawful killing.

McDonald's joins police

McDonald's, the burger chain, has begun discussions with Scotland Yard to sponsor research on crime and the drug crack and to work with police on campaigns among young people to stop drug abuse. An approach to the company arose from a Yard study into ways of reducing the street drug scene in London using current resources. Commercial sponsorship would allow the police to organise research without biting into funds or manpower. The study team's other ideas include creation of a unit of undercover detectives trained to buy drugs from street dealers and arrest them in a "buy-and-bust strategy". The team believes that detection may concentrate too much on leading dealers.

Snow covers Highlands

More than a foot of snow fell in the Highlands yesterday making driving conditions hazardous and disrupting rail and air travel in the North and North East. Police in the Highland region advised motorists not to travel as snow blanketed Aviemore, Inverness and Aberdeen. The AA said that a number of main roads were blocked. About 16,000 households were without electricity in Scotland following damage to power lines. But the conditions are good news for skiers. All five Scottish centres reported good snow on the hills and although there was no skiing yesterday it was hoped that all would be opened by the weekend. Weather, page 18

Burns attack charges

Two people were charged last night in connection with the attack on Susanne Capper, 16, who was found wandering naked on Tuesday with burns to 70 per cent of her body. A spokeswoman for Greater Manchester police said that charges against four others were imminent. All six — four men and two women — will appear before Manchester city magistrates this morning. Police say that the six, who are aged between 16 and 28 and include a boy aged 16, will face charges of kidnapping and attempted murder.

Education 'fails to meet nation's needs'

By JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

STANDARDS of literacy and numeracy in British schools are too low to meet the needs of a modern economy, the independent National Commission on Education reports today.

Although less than 1 per cent of adults are considered illiterate, reading standards among seven-year-olds fell during the late 1980s for the first time since the second war. In the 11-15 age group, there has been little change since 1945. Only in the period around 1950 and in the early 1980s did this age group progress.

The commission was established with a £1 million grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation after the Prince of Wales and Sir Claus Moser, warden of Wadham

College, Oxford, expressed concern about basic educational standards. A final report is due next autumn.

Today's evaluation, carried out by staff at the National Foundation for Educational Research, found British pupils ahead of their counterparts in other countries on geometry and statistics. But other industrialised countries had a lead in number skills, including the use of multiplication tables.

Standards of numeracy had dropped between 1982 and 1987. Britain had been left with a wider spread of attainment than other countries because of the gulf at the bottom end of the ability range.

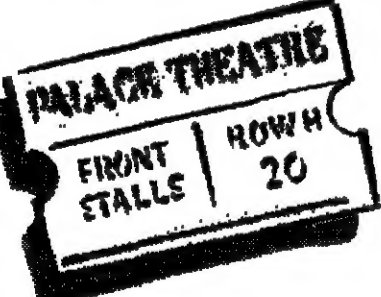
Standards have not fallen, however, as far as media reports often suggest, according to the report by Derek Foxman, Tom Gorman and Greg Brooks. The research

casts doubt on the common assumption that 1 million adults are functionally illiterate.

The report blames much of the recent controversy about standards on the lack of effective monitoring. It calls for regular and effective checks and argues that the government's national curriculum tests will not suffice. Public examination results, such as those published by the government last month, will not produce reliable indications of trends, the researchers say.

□ Record numbers of students have joined teacher training courses, John Patten, the education secretary, announced yesterday. The education department's annual survey shows a 97 per cent increase over 1983, when figures were first kept in their current form.

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Mayhew draws 'hideous warning of ethnic cleansing' from Yugoslavian conflict

'Million would be driven from Ulster if troops are withdrawn'

■ The Northern Ireland Secretary says Protestants would be driven out if Britain withdrew and that an end to IRA violence could transform the administration of justice

By EDWARD GORMAN, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

SIR Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, gave a warning yesterday that "ethnic cleansing" would come to Northern Ireland if Britain took a unilateral decision to leave the province.

Delivering a speech at the University of Ulster at Coleraine, co. Londonderry, about the same time that the IRA detonated three bombs in London, Sir Patrick said people who favoured a British withdrawal should take account of the "hideous warning" which the Yugoslav conflict provides.

He said Yugoslavia has "created a fresh understanding here that, properly understood, 'Brits Out' means the ethnic cleansing of a million human beings".

Sir Patrick seemed to be suggesting that with Britain gone, Roman Catholics would drive the one million Protestants out of Ireland, whereas many analysts predict the exact opposite, with the Protestants expelling Catholics from the north as part of the creation of a new independent state.

Sir Patrick's comments came in a speech on culture and identity in Northern Ireland which annoyed Unionists, who saw it as dangerously lopsided in favour of a nationalist perspective on the Irish problem. Like his predecessor, Peter Brooke, Sir Patrick said that Britain had no selfish or ulterior motive for remaining in Ulster, and was there only because a majority wished it to remain.

He appealed to the IRA and Sinn Féin to end their campaign of violence. This would create a new environment

which would have profound consequences for the maintenance of law and order, and for the administration of justice.

He described the aspiration to unity as no less legitimate than unionism, a cause which Britain was "warily, solemnly and steadfastly" honouring. He said a united Ireland was a political ideal which had inspired many fine patriots like Daniel O'Connell, Charles Parnell and Joe Devlin.

Sir Patrick added: "Her Majesty's government would never try to impede any body of opinion in working to achieve a place for Northern Ireland within a united Ireland, provided they work only by democratic and peaceful means."

In response, Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, issued a statement describing Sir Patrick's remarks as typical of an approach by Britain which he said had created political conflict in Ireland for generations. Mr Adams called for a new dialogue and negotiation which would include Sinn Féin, Ian Paisley, the Democratic Unionist Party leader, said he was shocked by the speech which he said was weighted heavily in favour of republicanism.

□ The Government has appointed Sir Louis Blom-Cooper QC as the first independent Commissioner for the three RUC interrogation centres in the province.

The announcement follows years of criticism by human rights organisations and some local politicians about the treatment of suspects in centres, particularly at Castle Reagan, Belfast.



On full alert: police confining off Oxford Street yesterday, top, as drinkers are encouraged to console themselves with a glass of wine. Right, a shopper waiting for the all-clear after two blasts, in the John Lewis store and Cavendish Square. Left four people injured

Ballot box failure drives IRA to fresh violence

THE IRA's pre-Christmas bombing campaign in Britain is further evidence that the Provisionals have moved away from a dual political and military strategy to one focused on violence alone (Edward Gorman writes).

In the 1970s, the IRA mounted a similar bombing campaign on the mainland in a fruitless effort to achieve a political objective, before beginning a dual strategy in the 1980s with Sinn Féin, its political wing. Ten years later it has become obvious to republican leaders that the so-called "Armalite and ballot box" approach has failed.

Sinn Féin attracts only about 10 per cent of the nationalist and republican vote in Northern Ireland. Observers have been saying for some time that this failure

has now been absorbed by the leadership in Dublin, which has decided to go all-out on a military strategy to try to force Britain to the negotiating table, regardless of the political consequences. IRA violence has to be conspicuous, expensive in terms of the damage it causes, and must attract as much publicity as possible. Hence the increasing focus on London and other British

cities. The Provisionals will have been encouraged by signs that the bombs are beginning to hurt economically, with insurers calling on the government to underwrite the terrorism risk. The handful of men behind the campaign, the so-called General Headquarters staff in Dublin, joined the Provisionals in the early 1970s. They are in their forties and have

White cliffs of Dover sold off to tourists

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THERE were no bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover yesterday, but, at the foot of England's mightiest bulwark against foreign aggression, a new species was spotted — the flightless rock scavenger.

Lumps of the proud chalk are being collected by a company operating under a mining licence and are being sold for £3.50p in sealed ring-pull cans. Several hundred of them have been bought at the £14 million council-owned White Cliffs Experience, which records the history of the nation's principal front-line port.

The chalk rocks are being promoted as "the ultimate alternative gift for Christmas" and there are plans for them to be marketed worldwide with certificates of authenticity.

Although the chalk pieces for sale come from falls from the cliffs or unsafe sections, the entrepreneurial venture has incurred the wrath of Dame Vera Lynn and the National Trust.

Dame Vera, whose 1941 record, "The White Cliffs of Dover", helped to raise morale during Britain's darkest days, said: "It's a funny thing to sell. If the rocks sell well to the Americans, that could be the thin end of the wedge so far as the cliffs are concerned."

The National Trust, which has owned more than 700 acres of the cliffs since 1928, wants the trade stopped, even though the rocks are collected from stretches belonging to the local authority. Warren Davis, the trust's spokesman, said: "Even though there may appear to be a lot of bits on the beach, if there's a craze in which a lot of people buy them there could be quite an effect."

Paul Pinnock, chairman of White Cliffs Country Tourism Association and manager of the White Cliffs Experience, said: "All we are selling are the pieces of chalk which have to be removed for safety reasons. We are not actually hacking away at the white cliffs. There is no need for the National Trust to feel huffy."

Chris Lean, spokesman for Dover District Council, said: "What is being sold is similar to tins of London smog. That sort of thing has been going on a long time."

Nude statue bears scars of sex war

By TOM RHODES

A NUDE woman cast in steel, which graces the staircase of the new library at King's College, Cambridge, has fallen foul of "politically correct" students. The sculpture has been so defaced that college elders have been forced to sanction its removal.

However, the black and white sculpture must remain in place for the time being despite its face having been hacked with a knife and its body covered in pieces of paper. Building regulations dictate that the staircase, leading from the first to the second floors of the newly renovated library, must have a proper balustrade to prevent accidents. The statue forms part of the balustrade and cannot be taken away until a suitable replacement has been found.

Tristan Rees Roberts, its designer, whose firm has been restoring the chapel at King's, was able to retrieve certain sculptures from the chapel to be used on the library staircase. "But we ran out and so decided to make our own. This was the preferred of the designs that I presented to the college," he said yesterday.

Insiders believe it is the feminist lobby within King's which has taken particular offence to the construction but, as is so often the case, the college itself is not prepared to lend any credence to such a rumour.

Mackay announces quick libel remedy to bypass juries

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Lord Chancellor yesterday announced reforms in the way libel complaints are tackled, including new speedy and simple machinery in which a judge, not a jury, will decide damages.

The reforms are likely to lead to large numbers of smaller libel actions being settled much more quickly and cheaply and without the involvement of juries. Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, said that he intended to set up a summary procedure under which people wishing to clear their names and claim libel damages up to a fixed ceiling could put their case to a High Court judge. This idea, recommended by the Court of Appeal judge Lord Justice Hoffmann, would help those "seeking speedy and economic disposals of defamation claims". Lord Mackay said in a parliamentary answer.

It would apply when moderate damages and an apology or correction would be sufficient and the plaintiff believes there is no defence. The aim is to give plaintiffs a chance to gain an immediate correction, and a relatively small sum in compensation, and to give defendants the chance to dispose quickly and cheaply of relatively trivial claims.

Lord Mackay also an-

nounced other reforms, including a new "offer of amends" procedure where newspapers accept they have mistakenly made a damaging statement. He said that the "offer of amends" defence would enable newspapers to "curtail proceedings by making an offer" where they recognised that a plaintiff had been defamed and deserved an apology and where they were willing to pay damages assessed by a judge.

Alastair Brett, company solicitor of Times Newspapers, said that the package was good for plaintiffs and newspapers. "The offer of amends" defence will weed out genuine complainants from gold-diggers, while the summary scheme will enable plaintiffs to obtain rapid redress and stop delaying tactics by newspapers," he said.

Lord Mackay said that some reforms required legislation. The "offer of amends" reform was recommended in a report on defamation last year by a working party under Lord Justice Neill. Other of its proposals to be adopted include: abolishing the rule preventing defendants from proving specific discreditable acts in mitigation of damages and reducing the limitation period (for bringing actions) in general to one year.

Aerobics instructor vanishes

By KATE ALDERSON

POLICE launched a huge hunt yesterday for an aerobics instructor, Joanna Grenside of Harpenden, Hertfordshire, who they fear may have been abducted.

Divers and a helicopter are involved in the search, which began after Miss Grenside, 25, was reported missing on Tuesday night. She failed to arrive for a fitness class at Harpers Leisure Centre, Harpenden, and her car was found abandoned with her belongings, including a rape alarm, strewn nearby.

Chief Inspector Roger How of Hertfordshire police said: "There is no reason for her to have disappeared. We are viewing the case with great concern."

Miss Grenside left her home at 6.55pm on Tuesday for the two-minute drive to the leisure centre. When she failed to arrive her boyfriend, who works at the centre, called the police. Her blue Ford Escort GHA was found locked in a public car park nearby. In the car park the police found Miss Grenside's rape alarm, which she had bought from the Suzi Lamplugh Trust.

Miss Grenside is described as slim, 5ft 2in with dark brown shoulder-length hair. She was wearing a blue anorak and tracksuit bottoms with a green Harpers sweatshirt. Police say she was not carrying any money or credit cards.

Sightless boy, 7, joins roll of courage

By JULIA LLEWELLYN SMITH

NICHOLAS Killen, the seven-year-old who lost both his eyes because of cancer, was named one of this year's Children of Courage in an award ceremony at Westminster Abbey yesterday.

Nicholas, one of seven children who received a medal from Norma Major, was showered with toys from well-wishers after he had his right eye removed last July to stop the cancer that had already claimed his left eye. But three months ago all his gifts were lost in a fire that destroyed his family's home in Saltaire, West Yorkshire.

Nicholas attended a carol service at the abbey followed by a Children of Courage

lunch at the House of Lords and a visit to 10 Downing Street. Despite meeting the prime minister's wife and stars such as Michael Crawford, he said: "The best thing about today was touching the Christmas tree in Westminster Abbey." His mother Susan, who brought five of her seven children to the ceremony, said: "He's a fantastic lad."

Another award-winner was Rachel Lambert, 7, from Barnsley, South Yorkshire, whose parents believe she saved the life of her four-year-old brother Ryan when he was attacked by a rottweiler. Rachel, who was in hospital for a week after being bitten on the arm and leg, said people should not be afraid of dogs "because they're not all bad". Her

mother Katherine said: "Sometimes she has nightmares, but she has no idea how courageous she was that day."

Daniel Churchill, 5, of Salford, Derby, has had a serious heart complaint since birth and his parents were told he could die at any time. He has had four major operations and a pacemaker fitted, but his mother Wendy, 26, said: "He's just a normal, cheeky little boy. When he doesn't want to go to bed, he plays with his pacemaker." Hassan and Hussein Salih, 6, from Hounslow, west London, were born joined at the trunk with one pair of legs between them but were separated in a 15-hour operation.

Photographs, pages 1 and 18

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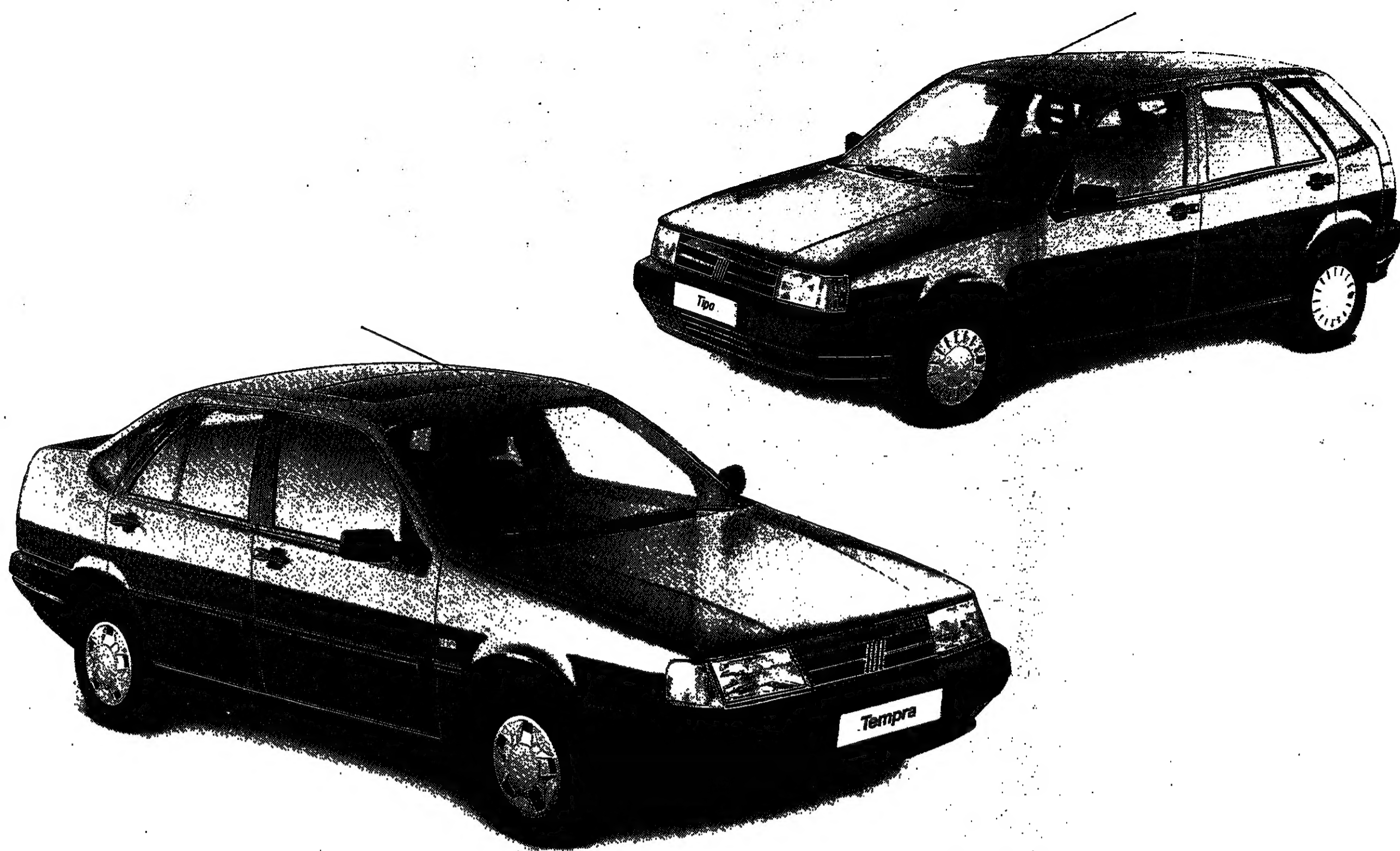
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Investigators win fight to extradite former BCCI treasury man

By ANGELA MACKAY AND CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

SYED Ziauddin Ali Akbar's extradition has been campaigned for by British authorities anxious to bring a case against a central figure who allegedly organised a series of transactions over several years to disguise BCCI's collapsing finances.

Almost 18 months after the bank was shut down, no convictions have been obtained here against any of the key figures. The Serious Fraud Office has been denied interviews with 18 former executives being detained in Abu Dhabi. Other senior figures — including the bank's founder, Agha Hasan Abedi — have taken refuge in Pakistan.

which does not have an extradition treaty with Britain.

So far, the SFO has made three arrests while at the same time waging a legal battle to have Mr Akbar returned to Britain to stand trial over allegations of false accounting to create the illusion of profitability.

Mr Akbar, a Pakistani and a British national, ran the bank's central treasury division in Britain from 1979 until 1984 when BCCI's treasury operations lost a total of £633 million. While he does not feature as a central figure in Lord Justice Bingham's recent enquiry into the supervision of the bank, Price Waterhouse, BCCI's auditors, delivered a long explanation of his

alleged activities in a report to the Bank of England in June 1991.

Price Waterhouse suggested Mr Akbar used several techniques ranging from misappropriation of deposits to creating false loans to fund and conceal the true nature of the bank's losses. Mr Akbar was also responsible for BCCI's Grand Cayman branch which managed the accounts of several significant customers and shareholders.

BCCI had branches in more than 60 countries. The bank was divided in two — one half registered in Luxembourg and the other in the Cayman Islands, where financial reporting standards are relaxed. Apart from allegations of money laundering, arms smuggling and

terrorist affiliations, the bank's senior management ran an intricate scam worth tens of billions of dollars that deceived the world's banking regulators for more than a decade.

The bank was also involved in commodity dealing through its Treasury division. Capital Commodity Dealers was the vehicle. Mr Akbar is widely described as the creative force behind Capcom. However, he did not become a shareholder or a director until 1987, one year after he left the bank. In 1984 and 1985, a substantial proportion of the bank's futures and foreign exchange business was conducted through Capcom.

The broker's dealings with BCCI

ceased at about the time Mr Akbar joined the firm full-time, but, under his management, Capcom appeared to flourish. Mr Akbar resigned from Capcom in October 1988, when he was arrested and charged with laundering drugs money while at BCCI. Soon after, Capcom lost its futures dealing licence and membership of two exchanges, however it may still deal in foreign exchange.

In October 1990, Mr Akbar was convicted at the Old Bailey of a conspiracy charge related to the laundering of drugs money and served six months of an 18 month sentence. Late last year, Mr Akbar was detained in Calais on an application by the US Justice De-

partment and has since languished in a French jail. His family live in Britain.

The contest for his extradition has been long and complicated. The American and the British governments have established a right in the French courts to extradite the banker. The Justice Department alleged he should return to the US to face racketeering charges relating to allegations that he helped BCCI to launder General Noriega's funds. The SFO's application, submitted shortly after, requests Mr Akbar's extradition to face charges of false accounting and creating a misleading impression.

French decision, page 1

Home secretary to be questioned over 'secret' extradition

By BILL FROST

BRITAIN'S longest-serving unconvicted prisoner, Lorrain Osman, arrived in Hong Kong yesterday to face multi-million-pound fraud charges after losing a seven-year battle against extradition.

Mr Osman was taken from his cell at Brixton prison, south London, and put on a flight to the colony on Tuesday night. On arrival at Kai Tak Airport he was handed over to officials of Hong Kong's independent commission against corruption.

The surprise extradition

Osman wakes up to worst nightmare

By BILL FROST

LORRAIN Osman this morning wakes up to what he has described as his worst nightmare. While he was still at Brixton prison, the frail 61-year-old former banker told *The Times* that there were many who would seek to ensure that he never came to trial if extradited to Hong Kong.

Sitting between two prison officers in the visiting room in the maximum-security wing, he said: "Too many people have too much to lose. If I am allowed to prove my innocence then their guilt will be obvious."

Mr Osman clutched his wife's hand and spoke of his determination to avoid extradition to the colony. "I could carry on like this forever. I am prepared to remain a remand prisoner at Brixton for 50 years if the alternative is facing a show trial or worse in Hong Kong. I have infinite patience and will fight this to the end. I will not go back. Never, never, never."

Although Mr Osman's willingness to endure life behind bars in Brixton seemed infinite, the home secretary's patience ran out on Tuesday. Until recently Mr Osman had never seriously entertained the possibility that he might be extradited. During seven years spent poring over legal textbooks in his cell, he had become convinced that the High Court would eventually reject the Hong Kong government's attempt to bring him back to face multiple fraud charges. Such was his absorption in the legal battle that he had ceased to notice the squalor of his surroundings in the maximum security wing.

Before his arrest on December 6, 1985, Osman had lived in affluence at the family home in St John's Wood, northwest London. With his wife Monica and daughter he had fled to Britain from Malaysia, claiming that threats had been made against them. Mrs Osman, always expensively dressed,

ended an extraordinary chapter in British legal history, during which the former banker fought nine widely-reported and time-consuming High Court actions against the authorities.

Against this background, the Home Office decided that Mr Osman's family and supporters should not be told before the flight that he was being returned to face trial in the colony, almost certainly fearing large-scale media attention at the airport.

Mr Osman's supporters,

who include MPs on both sides of the House, yesterday expressed anger over the "haste and secrecy" surrounding the extradition.

His wife Monica, who has always protested his innocence, said in a statement: "My own feelings are of loss, of grief. I cannot tell you how sad I feel now. But he must keep fighting. I know he is innocent and I must do all I can to help him prove that. I just hope that the Hong Kong government protect him properly and that he is safe. There are many people who would like him silenced."

Mrs Osman accused the authorities in Hong Kong and Britain of persecuting and hounding her husband. "Now his life is destroyed, it is a tragedy."

The former banker's lawyers said that they would be flying to Hong Kong later this week. Mike Kingston, a legal adviser to the family, said that another appeal had been lodged with the House of Lords but the application had yet to be dealt with. He added: "His solicitor was seeing him at 7pm last night and he was not told that Mr Osman was being put on a plane at 9.30pm. None of us were aware until the Press Association called one of my colleagues in the early hours of this morning."

Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MP for Islington North and a member of the campaign launched to win Mr Osman's freedom, said that he would be raising the extradition with the home secretary. "It is disgusting that someone should be deported without even his family or his lawyers being told. We cannot let this rest there."

Mr Osman, a Cambridge-educated barrister, is charged in Hong Kong with alleged offences linked to the £700 million collapse of Carrian Investments, a shipping and investments group. He was chairman of the group's biggest creditor, a Hong Kong-based subsidiary of BMBF, Malaysia's largest bank. It is alleged that he allowed loans to be made to Carrian without adequate security.

Mr Osman last month made his ninth unsuccessful attempt to avoid extradition. Two High Court judges refused to grant a writ of habeas corpus to free him from jail, saying that he had produced no fresh evidence in the application, launched after the home secretary signed an extradition warrant. His purpose was "not so much to obtain an order to which he is entitled but rather to filibuster as he has done time and time again," the judges said.

A Home Office spokeswoman yesterday gave only a few details about Mr Osman's departure. "I think it was decided that he had had maximum opportunity to fight the order," she said.



Osman: seven years fighting extradition

hot, spicy food. There is a prison warder here who tells me about Malay meals he has eaten in Soho. It's torture to hear him describe them."

If nothing else, perhaps the diet at Mr Osman's new prison in Hong Kong may prove a little more palatable than Brixton food.

But the lack of his almost daily visits from his family will be hard to bear. "It is the nights that terrify me. I wake up wondering why I am behind bars."

"I miss my wife and daughter so much it is like a physical pain," he said.



Hang 'em high: Robert Harrison, whose butcher's shop has sold traditional farm turkeys for 140 years

Hanging lobby wins day in Brussels

By MICHAEL HORNSEY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

TRADITIONAL farm-fresh turkeys, hand-plucked and with gently decomposing entrails intact, have been declared safe for Christmas dinner tables by European Community farm ministers.

Brussels had wanted to ban poultry-hanging as unclean. John Gummer, the agriculture minister and a self-proclaimed enthusiast for pungent flesh, fought a spirited rear-guard action at a meeting in Brussels yesterday, finally persuading EC veterinary and hygiene officials that "delayed evisceration" of turkeys, pheasants and other game birds need not endanger public health.

J. Seal Butchers, in Barnes,

southwest London, which has been selling traditional, black-and-bronze feathered turkeys since 1850, numbering Queen Victoria among its customers, can now hope to continue doing so.

Robert Harrison, the current owner, said yesterday: "Hanging is absolutely vital for flavour and tenderness." The poultry meat hygiene directive, part of the standardisation of EC rules in preparation for the single market, will allow birds to be hung for up to 15 days. Farmers rearing fewer than 10,000 birds a year will be able to send fowl with innards intact direct to their customers. Larger producers will

have to have their birds disembowelled after hanging at a licensed slaughter-house or meat cutting plant.

"This seems to be sensible news for once from Brussels," Henry Bryant, chairman of the Traditional Farm-Fresh Turkey Association, said. "Fifteen days should be enough, though some producers like to hang their birds a bit longer. There was never any logic in the hygienists' arguments. The chances of bugs and other nasties getting in are actually much greater once the guts have been taken out."

A compulsory code of practice requires the association's 30 members to rear only slow-growing birds that must be at

least 18 weeks old at slaughter, must be hand-plucked (a precondition for hanging) and must be fed mostly on cereals. Artificial growth promoters and routine use of antibiotics are banned.

The traditional bird, which accounts for only a minority of the 10 million turkeys sold every Christmas, is an improved version of such varieties as the Norfolk Black and Cambridge Bronze. It is a very different creature from the white-feathered, top-heavy monsters sold frozen in supermarkets and bred to convert food quickly into huge breasts. Such mass-produced birds sell for about a third the price of dark-feathered fowl.

New year spurt in home sales forecast

By KATE ALDERSON

A PREDICTION by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors that next year will herald the recovery of the housing market contrasts with its gloomy farewell to this.

"Few will lament the passing of 1992, a bad year on many fronts, not least the housing market," Peter Miller, its residential property spokesman, said. "But good news may not be too far away, with chartered surveyor estate agents across the country reporting that increased activity in late November is continuing."

"If, as we expect, the first six months of 1993 witness increased levels of activity, un-

derlying demand could be unleashed and actually outstrip supply, leading to price rises at the bottom end of the market. Increased demand will then move slowly up the housing ladder."

Last year, the institution published a survey which showed little optimism for a pick-up in prices in 1992.

Colin Davies, from Parsons, Son & Basley in Brighton, said: "The residential housing market is still extremely difficult, with a considerable amount of effort being put into arranging sales which subsequently fall through. The key factor to improving the market is confidence."

Hoover investigates flights offer

By A STAFF REPORTER

HOOVER, the electrical goods manufacturer, has launched an investigation into a free flights offer after claims that the rules were altered, it was disclosed today.

The company said the enquiry concerned an apparent change in conditions to a recent promotion offering free airline tickets for flights to Europe to purchasers of Hoover goods. It also said that it would do its utmost to honour all claims under its current offer of two free flights to the United States with any Hoover purchase over £100.

Concern about the European offer arose after applicants for tickets were told to resubmit their claims with three alternative dates at least 30 days apart and naming three alternative destinations.

A spokeswoman for Hoover said that there had been "an error" and it was now writing to the applicants to inform them

that the original terms of the offer still stood.

On the American offer, of two return tickets to either New York or Orlando in Florida, the spokeswoman said all claims would be met subject to ticket availability. If the applicants' first three choices of dates could not be met they would be invited to submit three more. If tickets for those could not be found they would be offered three dates by the travel operator, Your Leisure.

"We will do our best to make sure that people get the flights that they choose. It is a no-strings deal. You get the two flights, full stop." She said that the offer, which allows people to claim tickets worth about £400 for the purchase of a £120 vacuum cleaner, had been made possible because of the slump in the travel market.

"There is an enormous glut of unsold

seats," she added. The company is not saying how many qualifying sales have been made since the offer opened on November 1 but it confirmed that its factory at Cambuslang, in Strathclyde, had been put on seven-day working to meet the extra demand.

The Consumers' Association warned people to read the conditions of the offer carefully. "There is no guarantee that you will get the flights you want on the days you want," Keith Richards, senior lawyer at the association, said.

"This offer is subject to availability. If you want to take it up for peak times like school holidays, you may be disappointed," he said.

"Hoover has absolute authority on free accommodation, so you may be stopped from staying with friends or relatives. We only hope that Hoover will not exercise that right."

Sex equality comes to the playground

By PAUL WILKINSON

TEACHERS in West Yorkshire have been sent guidelines on bringing sex equality to the school playground. Kirklees council in West Yorkshire advised them to stop boys taking over the playground with football or boisterous games. Instead they should be encouraged to do jigsaws or read a book.

In a report entitled *Gender Issues in the Curriculum*, which is being sent to the authority's 200 schools and nurseries, the council also suggests that when playing doctors and nurses the children should be issued with unisex gowns.

Janice Whelan, one of the

Fireman plotted bank raid

A fireman who planned a hold-up to rescue his family from debt was jailed by the Old Bailey yesterday. He intended to rob a bank or building society after watching the television programme *Crime Monthly*, which "made it look easy", the court was told.

Keith Mount, 36, of Barnet, north London, was jailed for 30 months for possession of an imitation pistol with intent to commit a crime. He was arrested after taking a car for the robbery. The gun and a mask were found inside.

Mount's wife, Ann, begged the court not to jail her husband because she and their three children could lose their home without his earnings. The family had debts of about £44,000 and faced living in bed and breakfast accommodation, she said.

BT tests phone to stop hoaxers

BT is to begin trials of a "caller display" system which it hopes will help to reduce malicious and hoax calls. It will allow customers to see the number of the caller before answering.

BT said that a similar system on local calls in parts of the United States had had a dramatic effect in reducing malicious and hoax calls. The trials will take place among 500 customers in northeast Scotland from next month.

Abuse case falls

A woman aged 35, who claimed that she was sexually abused as a child by her adoptive father and stepbrother, has left it too late to sue them for damages, the House of Lords ruled. Lord Griffiths said that her action could not proceed because it had not been brought within the six-year time limit allowed under the 1980 Limitation Act.

Sam Fox sues

The former topless model Samantha Fox, 26, has issued a writ against her father, Pat, 48, for the return of a reported £1 million alleged to have gone missing during the ten years that Mr Fox acted as his daughter's manager.

Police bailed

Six policemen from Southwark, south London, were remanded on unconditional bail by Bow Street magistrates, accused of perverting the course of justice in connection with a breath test on an off-duty colleague.

Pay freeze

The ten highest-paid officials on Cambridge County Council have voluntarily agreed to accept a pay freeze next year. The gesture by directors and chief officers will save the authority about £20,000.

Grouse at risk

Black grouse are destined so fast in Wales that they may disappear from uplands areas by the end of the decade, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds says.

Safe reward

The motor insurer Independent, of Sale, Greater Manchester, is to charge Ken Platt, of Blackpool, £2,92 to renew his cover. He has never made a claim in 40 years.

First with news

The *Hampshire Chronicle* will break a 220-year tradition on January 9, when it will have news on its front page instead of advertisements.

Bets on Elvis

An Irish bookmaker is offering odds of 10,000-1 that Elvis Presley will be found alive in Ireland during 1993.

Euro-elections deal may force Major to accept voting reform

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major could be forced to introduce a proportional representation system of voting to abide by his agreement, signed at the Edinburgh EC summit, to give the United Kingdom an extra six MEPs in the European parliament.

Legislation to raise the number of seats from 81 to 87 will also provoke a fresh clash between the prime minister and Tory Euro-sceptics.

The problem of how to create extra seats without re-drawing every Euro-constituency border in Britain has

compelled ministers to consider a PR voting system in line with Northern Ireland and all other EC member states. The government is already under pressure from the European parliament and the European Commission to reform its first past the post voting system.

The increase in numbers of MEPs from the United Kingdom, France and Italy was agreed at Edinburgh in exchange for giving the former east Germany 18 seats following reunification. A European elections bill is to be introduced into the Commons early next year, probably in February, to pave the way for the increase in time for the next European elections in June 1994. Unless there is all-party agreement, the legislation will be vulnerable to attack from Euro-sceptics.

Kenneth Clarke, the home secretary, and his officials are looking at the options, including ways of by-passing the Boundary Commission and setting up a faster system of re-drawing borders. He is also considering some form of PR as the quickest, most painless way of fulfilling the agreement. The favoured system is

understood to be an additional member system, which will allow voters to pick an extra MEP from a party list.

Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders are only now beginning to recognise the implications of the weekend's agreement. The Labour leadership is still looking at its strategy, although officials believe a PR system for the extra seats would lead to more Labour MEPs.

Timing is important as Lord Plant's commission on electoral reform will produce its report in April. From early indications, he could favour an additional member system of voting for some elections.

The Liberal Democrats, who have no MEPs under the existing voting system, look certain to promise support for the bill if PR is introduced, given their fierce commitment to voting reform. However, they may help the government only if the bill brings in PR for all European seats.

Home, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Office officials are cursing the decision to ensure the number of European seats in the 1978 European Parliament Constituencies Act. As a result any changes in seats requires a new bill rather than a simple one-line order.

At present England has 66 seats; Scotland eight; Wales four; and Northern Ireland, under PR, three. The Boundary Commission is already bogged down re-drawing all 651 Westminster constituencies. Its officials could be asked to create a new map of Euro-constituencies within 18 months without a massive increase in resources or by waiving the rights of appeal for objects to proposed changes.

An alternative is to give extra MEPs to areas where the commission has already proposed new Westminster seats. As this is likely to favour the Conservatives, however, the opposition parties would oppose it.

Anger over council corruption claim

By ROBERT MORGAN, POLITICAL STAFF

TORY claims that Labour councillors in Scotland had been filling council posts with their relatives led to angry exchanges in the Commons yesterday.

Ian Lang, the Scottish secretary, said he had limited powers to look into the claims about Monklands District Council in Strathclyde. The council covers the constituencies of John Smith, the Labour leader, and Tom Clarke, the shadow Scottish secretary.

When the issue was raised during question time by David Shaw, Tory MP for Dover, George Galloway (Glasgow Hillhead, Lab) accused him of "impugning the integrity" of

people not present to defend themselves.

Mr Lang said: "I am indeed aware of these allegations. My powers to intervene in such matters are limited by statute law."

He said he had discretionary powers to order a local enquiry "if I consider that a local authority has either failed to carry out a statutory duty or I am of the opinion that an investigation should be made to determine whether they have so failed."

"I am only in a position to set up an enquiry where I am satisfied there has been a statutory breach of the local government obligations. I am not yet satisfied that is the case with regard to Monklands District Council."



Party politics: Marion Roe bears the brunt of Labour complaints about her select committee

Tory MPs accused of health 'cover-up'

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR MPs accused their Conservative colleagues on the Commons health committee of a cover up yesterday.

The Tory-dominated Commons health select committee split on party lines over a bland report on NHS trusts which has come up with very few conclusions. The four Labour members on the committee were outvoted on a number of critical amendments which have been annexed to the document — effectively as a minority report.

At a press conference later they accused the Tory MPs of ignoring evidence given by health organisations which claimed that the reforms were leading to fragmentation of the NHS. In their own press release the Labour MPs said the official document should have been much stronger and based on evidence received by the committee. "If the committee has such doubts that it thinks it should not come to firm conclusions, how can it be right for the government to press ahead at such speed? We fear the creation of a two-tier health service. We want equal access to good quality health

care. The NHS should not be a market-place."

The main report, described as "a green paper" by Marion Roe, the committee chairman, concludes that because trusts will dominate the health service in the future there is little point in evaluating them against NHS hospitals. By April 1994 about 95 per cent of NHS hospitals and community units are expected to have opted out of health authority control.

It recommends that the committee, which does not come down either in favour or against trusts, should broaden the enquiry remit to look at the function of districts, regions and GP fundholders.

The Labour recommendations include:
□ Setting up an independent body to investigate victimisation of "whistle blowers".
□ The retention of Whitley Council pay and conditions.
□ A legal requirement that trusts should hold meetings in public.
□ Slowing down the timetable for NHS trusts to "carefully evaluate progress and make

comparisons while there is still an opportunity to do so".

It concludes that changes are leading to a two-tier service, with successful hospitals attracting more money and specialising in more profitable areas of health care.

At a press conference to launch the report, committee members did little to conceal their frustration over the lack of agreement on the report.

MPs publicly accused each other of trying to score party points, posing a question mark over the future credibility of the all-party committee. Alice Mahon, the Labour MP for Halifax, who was involved in a row with Mrs Roe over allegations that the committee planned to give health ministers an early copy of the report, was the most vociferous. "I think the conclusions attempt to cover up very serious early warnings of what is now happening to the NHS."

Hugh Bayley, the Labour MP for York, accused the committee of failing to include vital evidence from the BMA in its report which said a competitive market threatened the stability and integra-

tion of the NHS. Conservative MPs pointed out that six members of the committee had been appointed since the enquiry into trusts had started, including four new MPs. They had not even heard the oral evidence.

Mrs Roe, the Conservative MP for Broxbourne, said it was important for select committees to try to reach a compromise view and produce a report on what they are able to agree. "I think there are some cases where there will inevitably be political differences. It is right and proper that MPs should make their views known by amendment."

James Clappison, Tory MP for Hertsmere, said it was hardly surprising that the Tories did not vote for the Labour amendments as most were highly political.

Alice Mahon countered: "Our amendments show very clearly the huge divisions between us. I don't see any coming together on this."

Virginia Bottomley, the health secretary, later said the report identified a number of issues where further clarification was needed.



Maastricht waits in the wings

MPs, who start their three and a half week Christmas break today, face the daunting task in the new year of again grappling with the Maastricht bill. Tony Newton, leader of the Commons, announced that Wednesday and Thursday, January 13 and 14, will be devoted to the continuation of the line-by-line scrutiny of the measure, the European Communities (amendment) bill.

MPs are likely to spend every Wednesday and Thursday over the rest of the winter and spring considering the bill. Sir Dudley Smith, who first became an MP 33 years ago, expressed the pessimistic view that the bill would carry on "for the rest of our parliamentary lives".

Jobs 'at risk'

Dr Liam Fox, Tory MP for Woodspring, introduced a bill to reduce "the massive over-regulation of slaughterhouses" under new EC and UK food legislation. More than 1,000 jobs were at risk in the South-West as a result of the regulatory threat to small slaughterhouses, he said.

New whip

Andrew Mitchell, Conservative MP for Gedling, has been appointed a junior government whip in succession to Timothy Boswell, who was made a junior education minister last week after the resignation of Nigel Forman.

In Parliament

Commons (9.30): Christmas adjournment debates on various topics. Lords (11): Mink Keeping Order and other orders.

British Psychological Society

Mind drugs 'no better than sugar'

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

A CUP of sweetened tea or a cold drink may be as effective at boosting memory as the so-called "smart drugs" sold through health shops and on the black market to enhance brain power, according to a study by psychologists.

Millions of pounds are spent in Europe and America on "cognitive enhancers" — drugs such as vasopressin, piracetam and hydergine which are believed to improve mental performance — mainly by college students hoping for an advantage in examinations. But research at the University College of Swansea suggests that any effect the drugs have on memory may be simply the result of increasing glucose level.

Dr David Benton and Deborah Owens tested 33 university students on their ability to recall a list of words and a series of pictures. The tests were conducted in the morning after the students had gone without food since the night before. Those given a sweetened breakfast drink had faster recall than those who were starved, and the higher the blood glucose level the better the performance.

In a second study, 161 students were asked to recall a list of words after drinking either a glucose or an artificially sweetened drink. Those who had the glucose drink remembered more words.

Presenting the results to the psychological society, Dr Benton said they provided further evidence that cognitive enhancing drugs produced their effect by increasing the availability and uptake of glucose rather than acting directly on the brain. Earlier work has shown that some of the drugs cannot be absorbed from the bloodstream into the brain cells and when injected directly have no effect.

But Dr Benton warned against relying on a can of fizzy drink to get through an examination. "If you push up your glucose level rapidly with a sugary snack it will come down rapidly. A better strategy is to eat little and often, and choose carbohydrate rather than refined sugar."

Personality tests could help keep soccer players on the ball

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

FOOTBALL club managers might do well to get their new signings to take a personality test, the British Psychological Society was told yesterday.

Matches can depend on the composure of penalty-takers, but few managers really understand how well their players respond to stress, according to George Silk and Stephen Smith, a company of occupational psychologists. England's fate in the last World Cup might even have been altered by a different selection of players for the penalty shoot-out against Germany in the semi-final.

They interviewed 55 footballers at Crystal Palace, Sheffield United and Celtic, using a questionnaire designed to elicit information about personality types. Despite the managers' scepticism — one said he would be happy to distribute the forms to the two or three players on his staff who could read and write — the psychologists were able to draw some conclusions.

They found that players run the whole spectrum of emotional control "from Linaker-



Paul Gascoigne: highly emotional player



Gary Lineker: controls feelings under pressure

level to Gazza-grade" but that those who flourished for longest tended to be the cooler types. "The players who survive in the game are more caring, tolerant and interested in the welfare of others," Dr Silk said. "They are also more forward-planning, more interested in other players, and more co-operative."

Comparing the personality profiles with assessments made by the clubs shows that football managers remain suspicious of creative players. They are seen as less enthusiastic and worse for qualities such as aggression, heading, passing and first touch. "Does

this constitute a charter for cloggers — only fools and workhorses?" asked Dr Silk.

In general, he said, the tests showed that the England manager Graham Taylor's remark "footballers are no different from human beings" contains a lot of truth. But it was no good asking whether they thought theory was important in football. That question, because of its vocabulary or its abstract nature, got few sensible responses.

But then, as Dr Silk concluded: "It's a game of two halves, Brian. Frankly."

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Having fun is all in the genes

By OUR HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

THE best party-givers are born rather than made, according to a study that suggests that wallflowers, misfits and loners should blame genes rather than upbringing for their lack of social graces. A desire to help people is also inherited but anti-social behaviour such as lying, stealing and bullying is learned from parents and other adults.

The study of 370 identical and non-identical twins aged from 5 to 16, presented by Dr Jim Stevenson of the Institute of Child Health, offers hope that the cycle of deprivation some families become locked into may be broken by environmental change.

Dr Stevenson said the findings added to the evidence that sociable and anti-social behaviour were entirely distinct rather than two ends of the same spectrum, and could have evolutionary significance. "Being sociable with and helpful to people close to us could have some survival value," he said.

□ Men and women react very differently to people with physical and mental disabilities, according to new research (Nick Nutall writes). Men tend to feel annoyed, irritated and disgusted by handicapped people while women are scared and embarrassed, researchers have found.

Police face sack under new code of discipline

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

LAZY or incompetent police officers face pay cuts, demotion or the sack under a new personnel system agreed yesterday and expected to become law within 18 months.

The scheme, drawn up by representatives of all three staff associations and agreed by a Home Office advisory board, follows calls by chief constables and Kenneth Clarke, the home secretary, for action to deal with poorly performing officers. Under 3 per cent of officers are likely to be disciplined under the scheme.

Mr Clarke confirmed that the scheme would be introduced as soon as the legislation could be agreed. He said that he was planning a discussion document early next year on police discipline, the new system and the code of ethics. He added that, in most cases of their dealings with the public, the police were in the same position as other public servants. They were expected to provide a service with courtesy and efficiency.

The Police Federation has expressed scepticism of the need for the system, arguing that present discipline codes are sufficient. Yesterday Peter Ryan, chief constable of Norfolk and chairman of a chief constables' committee on personnel, said that the system could begin in 1994.

Five stages are proposed for an "incapability" scheme to cover all ranks up to assistant chief constable. Separate rules for higher ranks are being drawn up and could be linked to the introduction of short service contracts. Mr Ryan said that the purpose of the system was not to orchestrate wholesale dismissals but to improve management.

Under the first stage, police managers would talk to officers informally and set out their work. At a later stage they could be told that unless they improved they could be penalised or sacked.

Continued failure could lead to a formal hearing, chaired by a senior officer and two assessors. Officers would have the right of review by their chief constables and could take the cases to an industrial tribunal.

Whitehall promotes scheme to create more black managers

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

CIVIL servants from ethnic minorities are to be offered special training in a drive to increase the number of blacks and Asians in management positions in Whitehall.

The courses will be aimed at clerical workers, a high proportion of whom are from ethnic minorities, according to latest Whitehall figures.

A number of government departments and agencies are also running pre-recruitment courses teaching writing communication skills in an attempt to prepare blacks and

Asians for work in the civil service.

In Liverpool, Customs and Excise and the environment department ran a scheme in which 11 out of 12 trainees gained a national vocational qualification in business studies. Most of them then competed successfully for clerical jobs in the civil service. Similar courses have been run by the environment department in Bristol and Manchester and by the Health and Safety Executive in west London. The three-month courses for

clerical workers will include advice on interview techniques and training in management skills. The initiative follows disappointing results from a two-year drive to increase the number of ethnic minority staff employed as executive officers, the most junior management grade in the civil service.

Latest figures released by Office of Public Service and Science (OPSS) show that there are already more ethnic minority employees in the civil service, at 5 per cent, than in the general working population, at 4.2 per cent.

The number of blacks and Asians employed as executive officers rose by 0.2 per cent to 3.6 per cent between last year and this year. At the most senior levels, the proportion is lower, with ethnic minority representation at 1.82 per cent, up from 1.81 per cent last year.

Robert Jackson, parliamentary secretary of the OPSS, said: "Ethnic minority staff are still clustered in the more junior grades within the civil service and there is a need to improve representation at more senior levels."

Ethnic minorities are strongly represented at the lowest clerical grades, says the government report on equal opportunities for people from ethnic minorities in the civil service. According to the figures, 5.6 per cent of white civil servants, 0.9 per cent of black and 2.3 per cent of Asians are in the more senior grades. However, 50 per cent of white civil servants, 80 per cent of blacks and 71 per cent of Asians are employed at non-managerial clerical grades.

The government is clearly anxious to counter any possible argument that positive discrimination is being adopted to increase the number of black and Asian workers in the civil service. The report emphasises that the courses will also be open to white employees and that, under the Race Relations Act, employers can provide training to people from particular racial groups to prepare them for work in areas in which those groups are under-represented.

EC 'lets risky goods into British shops'

By MICHAEL DYNES, WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

CROSS-BORDER shopping in the single European market will carry high risks because of the lack of protection for consumers, according to a report published yesterday.

The Consumers in the European Community Group said the EC had failed to provide effective redress for faulty goods, comprehensive safety regulations or legislation on liability for shoddy services.

In spite of EC promises, the start of the single European market on January 1 will not enable UK consumers to buy a wider range of goods and services with the same confidence that they have here, says the report titled *No Single Market for Consumers*.

The pressure group, representing the UK's main consumer groups, said that products from other EC countries will be freely available here whether or not they comply with UK safety laws, and it urged shoppers "not to gamble with safety".

The UK has high standards for products such as children's nursery equipment and crash helmets. "There may not be equivalent safety guarantees for products made in other EC countries."

Consumers who have bought faulty goods will "almost certainly have to sue abroad to get redress", the

report says. Vendors are under no obligation to ensure their products work or to take back faulty products. "The cost and difficulty of bringing a legal action in a foreign court will probably exceed the value of the product, so the best advice might be to throw it away."

The risks of cross-border purchases of services, such as car repairs and hotel and restaurant services, could be even greater. A proposal to make it easier for consumers to get compensation was abandoned during the recent European Council meeting in Edinburgh.

Although shoppers will be able to bring back an unlimited amount of goods from other EC countries, there is no guarantee that they will be compatible with equipment bought in the UK. "Video cassettes bought in France will not work in UK video cassette recorders," the report says.

European suppliers of financial services, including insurance, mortgages and loans, will be able to compete for business in Britain from January 1. Consumers will not, however, be able to compare the real cost of borrowing money because of wide variations in how annual interest rates are calculated, the report claims.

Smith warned of party revolt over Maastricht treaty bill

By SHEILA GUNN AND JILL SHERMAN

The Labour leader is under pressure to show his support for European unity and to push ahead with reforms that will ensure victory at the next general election

JOHN Smith was urged last night by senior Labour MPs to deliver a clear alternative programme of government and to support the early ratification of the Maastricht treaty.

As Roy Hattersley, the former deputy leader, called on Mr Smith to spell out clearly the reasons for voting Labour, the party's pro-European wing flexed its muscles with a Commons motion backing Mr Smith's stance of supporting the Maastricht treaty.

The motion, designed to show the strength of pro-Maastricht feeling after a period in which the more sceptical wing has held sway, was signed by 85 MPs including Neil Kinnock, Mr Hattersley and Gerald Kaufman, the former shadow foreign secretary.

It was clearly intended to counter any impression that Labour's European sympathies are weakening, and is a tacit warning to Mr Smith that he would face a revolt if he tried to sink the treaty. He is being urged to make it clear that Labour will not be asked to vote against the third reading of the Maastricht bill.

In a separate move Mr Hattersley warned the new Labour leader not to rely on a mixture of dissatisfaction with the Tories, class interest and support for Labour's new-found respectability to win a 1996 general election.

Although he did not openly criticise Mr Smith, Mr Hattersley made it clear that the Labour leadership must supply positive reasons for voting Labour. Speaking at a parliamentary press gallery lunch he said: "Assaults on the most unpopular administration this century are enormously enjoyable. But we cannot continue the bombardment of soft targets indefinitely. We have to do more than demonstrate Conservative failure."

Although voters probably recognised the Tory failures at the April general election, they did not believe that Labour would do any better. "They will only begin to give positive support when they are offered a clear and convincing alter-

native programme of government," he said.

Mr Hattersley's comments follow murmurs of criticism from some factions within the party that Mr Smith is not pressing ahead fast enough with Mr Kinnock's reforms. Mr Hattersley went on: "Neil Kinnock removed the reasons for not voting Labour. John Smith's task is to supply the reasons for voting Labour."

If the party was to win the next election, 1993 had to be the year in which it began to talk about the principles be-

hind its policy. Next year's task was to provide an absolutely unequivocal reply to the question: what does Labour now stand for?

"The answer is the answer we have always had to offer: a society in which power and wealth are more equally distributed," Mr Hattersley said. However, he did not propose another full policy review or detailed announcements next year of a Queen's speech for 1996.

Mr Hattersley also defended Mr Smith's pre-election shadow Budget, which

many held responsible for Labour's defeat by proposing tax increases for some. "The problem was not what it proposed. The failure was our reluctance — all of us in the shadow cabinet — to argue, much earlier, for the principles on which the proposals were based."

Labour had to appeal over the heads of those who tried to "exploit selfishness and greed", and should mobilise the honourable instincts of decent people who detested the society created by the Tories. "Latent in this country there is a real contempt for the philosophy of devil-take-the-hindmost and weakest-to-the-wall, which is Lady Thatcher's lasting contribution to the politics of this country," he said.

The pro-European motion was signed by several MPs who were unhappy about the decision to oppose the government in the Maastricht debate last month. The motion says its objective is in accordance with the view of the October 1992 Labour party conference that "the Maastricht treaty, while not perfect, is the best that can currently be achieved". It also calls on the government to endorse the social chapter of the treaty so that the ratification bill can be supported by both sides of the House at the earliest opportunity.

Signatories yesterday said the Edinburgh summit now gave the Labour leader an ideal opportunity to make the party's position clear. It was signed by six of the new intake of Labour MPs. One of them, Peter Mandelson, said: "John Smith will be very reassured by this backing for his pro-Maastricht stance."

Giles Radice, the MP for Durham North, said: "New MPs have made clear their strong support for a pro-European position and their objection to delaying tactics on the Maastricht bill."

Labour NEC agrees to cut HQ spending

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Labour party is to cut back heavily on spending at its London headquarters and regional offices to devote more resources locally to winning vital marginal seats.

The decision was taken by the party's ruling national executive at a five-hour session yesterday which approved in principle plans for cutting day-to-day running costs by 30 per cent. The number of staff at the Walworth Road HQ in south London are to be cut from 120 to 90 and regional offices are to be reduced from nine to six or seven.

During a sometimes anguished debate yesterday NEC members failed to agree on precisely where the cuts should fall and which of the regional offices should go. There is to be a two-month consultation period before final decisions are taken early next year. NEC members were said to have accepted that serious action was required to cut the £2 million overdraft, and to reduce gen-

eral spending to just over £8 million a year by 1993.

About 75 per cent of Labour's spending is at head office, 20 per cent in the regions and 5 per cent at local level. The aim in future is to reduce head office spending to 60 per cent, leave regional spending at 20 per cent and raise local spending to the same figure.

The 100-page report drawn up by the finance committee proposes a £10 million fund for the next election, and the establishment of a new national organisation fund to target local spending more efficiently. It also recommends the setting up of pilot projects in 30 constituencies to look at ways of increasing party membership. Individual membership is expected to fall below 200,000 and union-affiliated membership by one million to 3.6 million within four years. The projects will look at the success of telephone canvassing, doorstep campaigning and reducing membership fees.

CAMPAIGN

FOR A

REFERENDUM



People's voice: Peter Lewis, chairman of the Campaign for a British Referendum, speaking at Westminster yesterday as MPs of all parties intensified their call for a popular vote on the Maastricht treaty after the

Edinburgh summit. Mr Lewis fought Chesham for the Conservatives at the last general election against Tony Benn. His former opponent is now, ironically, one of the referendum campaign's leading supporters.

£45m to help the 'latch-key' children

By NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

WORKING mothers are to be helped by a £45 million package designed to provide an extra 50,000 childcare places over the next three years.

The scheme, aimed at offering professional supervision of school-age children outside normal classroom hours and

in the holidays, was unveiled yesterday by Gillian Shephard, the employment secretary. The money will be used to pay for premises and staff to look after children aged between about five and 12 until their parents can collect them after work.

Mrs Shephard said at a childcare conference in London: "There has been a

lack of good quality, safe, stimulating and affordable childcare for this age group. Many organisations would like to provide this care but they are hampered by the set-up costs."

The money will channelled through training and enterprise councils in England and local enterprise companies in Scotland.

CBI and unions unite on railways

By JONATHAN PRYNN

THE government's rail privatisation proposals are "ill-conceived and ill-timed", the Confederation of British Industry told MPs yesterday.

In a rare display of public unanimity, senior representatives of unions and the employers condemned the government's record of underinvestment in the railway system and questioned whether privatisation could reverse the trend. They were appearing before the all-party Commons select committee on transport.

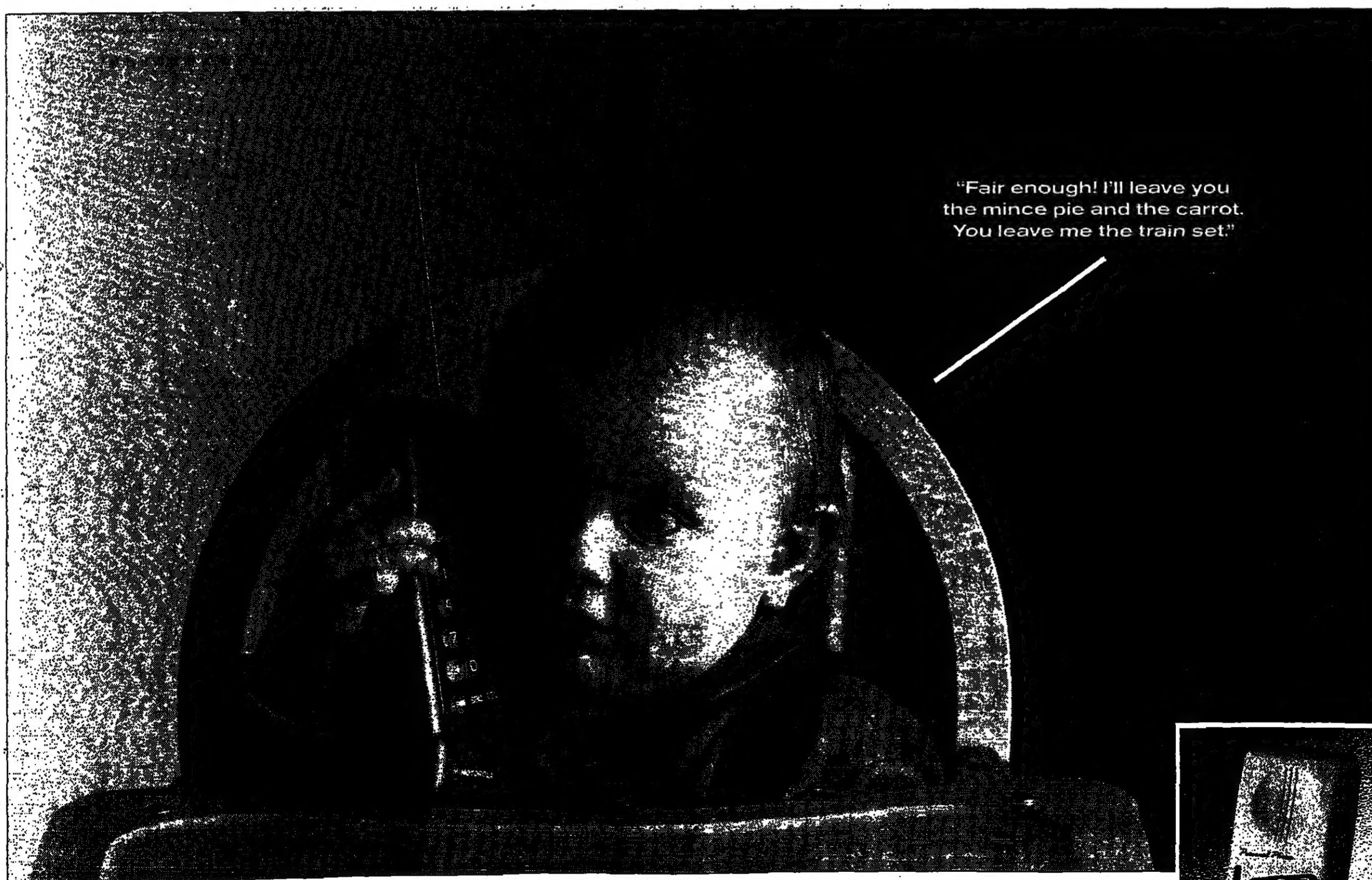
The government's plans involve the operation of the railway network being franchised out to private companies with ownership of the track remaining in the hands of a single public body.

A succession of organisations with interests in the railways have criticised the government's rail white paper during the committee's hearings, but the comments from the CBI will be particularly unwelcome at the transport department.

David Yeomans, chairman of the CBI transport committee, said a £15 billion investment shortfall in the railway network had resulted in "gross inefficiencies", in rail services, which was driving traffic on to the roads, creating congestion, environmental problems and a huge cost to business. The CBI said it was concerned less with the question of ownership of the railways and more with how the quality and level of services could be improved.

Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the RMT transport workers union, said there was no way the private sector alone could close the investment gap and called on the government to relax Treasury funding rules to allow BR to borrow against its assets in the private sector. "The true level of investment in railways, if you exclude the Channel tunnel, is barely above 1960s levels," he said. Privatisation would allow franchise operators to pick the best routes, while other lines were forced to close down.

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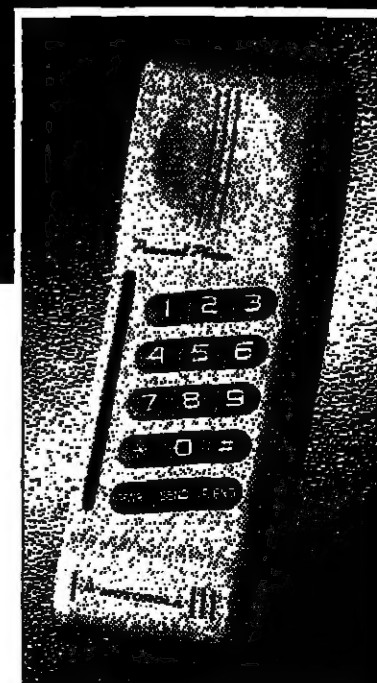
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Germans support Russian reforms with extra £600m

■ Bonn has extracted a Russian promise on an earlier withdrawal of troops from eastern Germany in return for increased funds

FROM ANATOL LIEVEN IN MOSCOW

GERMANY is to give Moscow more than DM1.55 billion (£632 million) in additional funds in a move to help President Yeltsin and the faltering Russian reform process. The funds were included in nine agreements signed by Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, and President Yeltsin in Moscow yesterday.

The agreements include German help in dismantling Russian nuclear and chemical weapons, improving economic training, and developing Russian customs. The two sides promised to combat smuggling of nuclear material, which has caused worry in Germany after the discovery of several smuggling rings based in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

After some haggling, Russia has agreed to complete the evacuation of its troops from eastern Germany on August 31 1994, four months earlier than planned. It had already dropped its demand for payment for the military installations. In return, Moscow will get another DM550 million

to help build housing for the soldiers in Russia. Germany is also to give an additional DM1 billion for victims of Nazi war crimes in Russia, which is expected to be used, in fact, to bolster state finances. In their joint declaration, both sides denounced crimes against humanity by their countries in the past.

Speaking to the press, Mr Yeltsin fielded questions about his having allegedly weakened the reform process, and on the contrast between the economic success of China, which he is visiting this week, and Russia's misery. Mr Yeltsin said that this was because China had been carrying out reforms for 14 years and Russia for only one, but that if the opposition of "a narrow group of diehard conservatives" could be overcome, in 14 years' time, Russia's achievements would match those of the Chinese.

Mr Yeltsin and Herr Kohl's meeting took place under the shadow of the dismissal of Yegor Gaidar and the appointment of Viktor Chernomyrdin as prime minister.

Herr Kohl described Mr Chernomyrdin as "a practical, reliable man in whom one can have confidence that he will continue the reform process". German officials have been saying that because of Mr Chernomyrdin's membership of the industrial establishment, he may be in a better position than Mr Gaidar was to push through limited reforms.

Perhaps because both sides had so little to offer, the mood of the talks was determinedly friendly. President Yeltsin invited Herr Kohl to his country residence at Zavidovo, where they sat in a sauna together with Theo Waigel, the German finance minister. In return, Herr Kohl invited Mr Yeltsin to visit Germany next year and come to his home town in the Rhineland.

The two leaders emphasised their desire that the 1.3 million strong ethnic German community in the former Soviet Union should remain in Russia, although few people believe that this is likely.



A walk in the woods: Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, strolls yesterday with Boris Yeltsin near the Russian president's hunting lodge at Zavidovo

Allies of Gaidar plan their next move

FROM ANNE McELVOY IN MOSCOW

RADICAL ministers in the Russian government were still considering yesterday whether they intended to remain in the cabinet of Viktor Chernomyrdin, a conservative elected to the post of prime minister after the Congress of People's Deputies rejected Yegor Gaidar, the radical acting incumbent, on Monday.

Mr Gaidar, who said that he could not work in a government led by Mr Chernomyrdin, announced yesterday that he would leave politics and return to the Institute of Economic Policy as director.

Vladimir Shumeiko, first deputy prime minister, said that he did not expect the cabinet to resign en masse. He said Anatoli Chubais, the privatisation minister, intended to stay. Rumours persist that Andrei Nechayev, the economics minister, Aleksandr Shokhin, deputy prime minister, and Pyotr Aven, the foreign trade minister, were uncertain about remaining, and the radical camp was said to be evaluating its chances of diluting the conservative line.

The ministers' decision is made more difficult by the contradictory signals that the new prime minister has been sending about his intentions for the reform programme. He has spoken of the need for a "different emphasis" while insisting that there will be no reversal in policy.

Yesterday President Yeltsin was at pains to reassure Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, that conditions would remain favourable to much-needed investment.

"In spite of the wrangling at Congress, Russia is moving forward on the path of economic reform," he said, adding that there had been considerable improvement "behind the collapsed barriers of communism".

In an attempt to build bridges with moderate conservatives, he added: "Even people in the military-industrial complex do not want to be shackled with economic restraints again. That will not happen."

Now Mr Yeltsin is faced with the problem of adapting his anti-conservative rhetoric to the new circumstances. He also faces the ire of democratic supporters who consider his acceptance of Mr Chernomyrdin was a betrayal of principle.

Amato wins vote of confidence

Rome: Giuliano Amato, the Italian prime minister, yesterday won a key confidence vote in parliament despite a week of scandal and electoral defeat that has rocked his fragile coalition. The vote, on regional aid to Italy's poor south, divided 309 to 256 in Signor Amato's favour, with one abstention.

The four parties in government all lost ground in local elections last weekend, widely seen as the latest example of a revolt against the political establishment.

The separatist Northern League is poised to take over its first local administrations. The league has led a small but noisy revolt against the southern Italian aid plan, to which it had tabled 200 blocking amendments, virtually forcing Signor Amato into the confidence vote. (Reuters)

Strike spreads

Warsaw: A strike spread to more than half Poland's pits as about 130,000 workers protested against declining wages and demanded that the government act to help the stricken mining industry. PAP news agency said. (Reuters)

Space project

Tokyo: Japan and Germany are to co-operate on a £83 million space project that calls for the launch and recovery of a jointly developed satellite in February 1994. The satellite will be launched from Japan, officials said. (AFP)

Troops leave

Nicosia: The 341-strong Danish peacekeeping force in Cyprus has handed over its duties to British troops. The withdrawal will leave British forces with a larger area along the "green line" of the divided island to patrol. (Reuters)

Drug arrest

Paris: Guillaume Depardieu, 22, son of French actor Gérard Depardieu, has been charged with importing, possessing and selling narcotics. He was remanded in custody with four others. (Reuters)

Cigarette papers

Paris: The newspaper Libération, in a spoof on France's new anti-tobacco laws, published separate editions yesterday for smokers and non-smokers. A cigarette manufacturer financed the double issue. (Reuters)

Clan feud forces Tajik exodus

FROM ROBERT SEELY IN AIVADZH

The remnants of a 60,000-strong army of weary Tajik refugees driven from their homes by clan bloodshed have formed an exodus across the River Oxus to the mountains of Afghanistan.

Under cover of darkness and harried by ill-disciplined fighters loyal to the former regime in Tajikistan, the refugees have ferried themselves across the river from island to island on makeshift rafts of planks and empty oil barrels. The refugees are victims, not of post-Soviet instability so much as the creeping influence of Afghanistan's war. Their hitherto little-known republic, perched high on the Pamir mountains between China, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, has become the scene of Central Asia's latest communal conflict. The country has become lawless as gangs of supporters of the country's former Soviet regime run amok.

A century ago the land sweeping in a crescent from the Caucasus via the Caspian Sea to the Chinese border was a testing ground between Britain and Russia for the domination of Asia. Today, hampered by political chaos, clan feuding and post-Soviet poverty, it has been transformed into an arc of instability threatening to engulf much of the region.

Although the refugees are accused by their fellow Tajiks of being Islamic fundamentalists, their real crime is to hail from a specific region, Garm, in the north, which traditionally has been at odds with the ruling Tajik group, the Kulyabi.

Kulyabi members comprise the main block of pro-government supporters. In fighting in November the Garm Tajiks, who have attempted to give as good



as they got, were out-gunned by government troops and forced to flee. Russian officers manning the flimsy border post at Aivadzhi say that up to 1,000 refugee women and children have already died of cold or malnourishment during their flight. Russia's troops play an ambiguous role, officially remaining neutral but also supplying information and sometimes arms to the Kulyabi forces.

Mobs of Kulyabi have set fire to the refugees' villages and reduced their concrete and mud-brick homes to rubble earlier this month. The inhabitants took what they could before fleeing south towards Afghanistan, looking for Russian border posts on the way in the hope of finding protection.

Forced into the desert, they charged the electric border fence at three points, according to Russian officers, to swim or sail across the Oxus. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that 35,000 Tajiks have crossed into Afghanistan and last week 5,000 more were crossing daily.

□ Dushanbe: Up to 20 Muslims were summarily shot dead by Kulyabi forces outside a cinema in the Tajik capital yesterday. The victims were rounded up by armed and uniformed men as they got off buses. (AFP)

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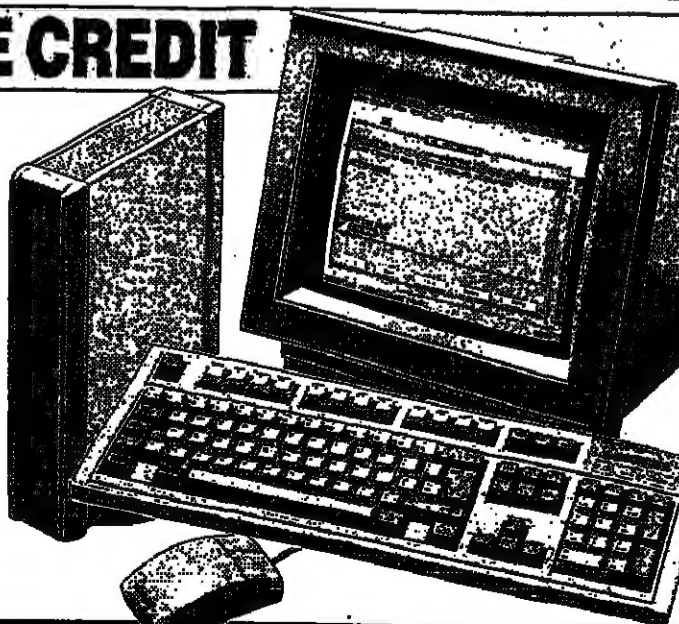
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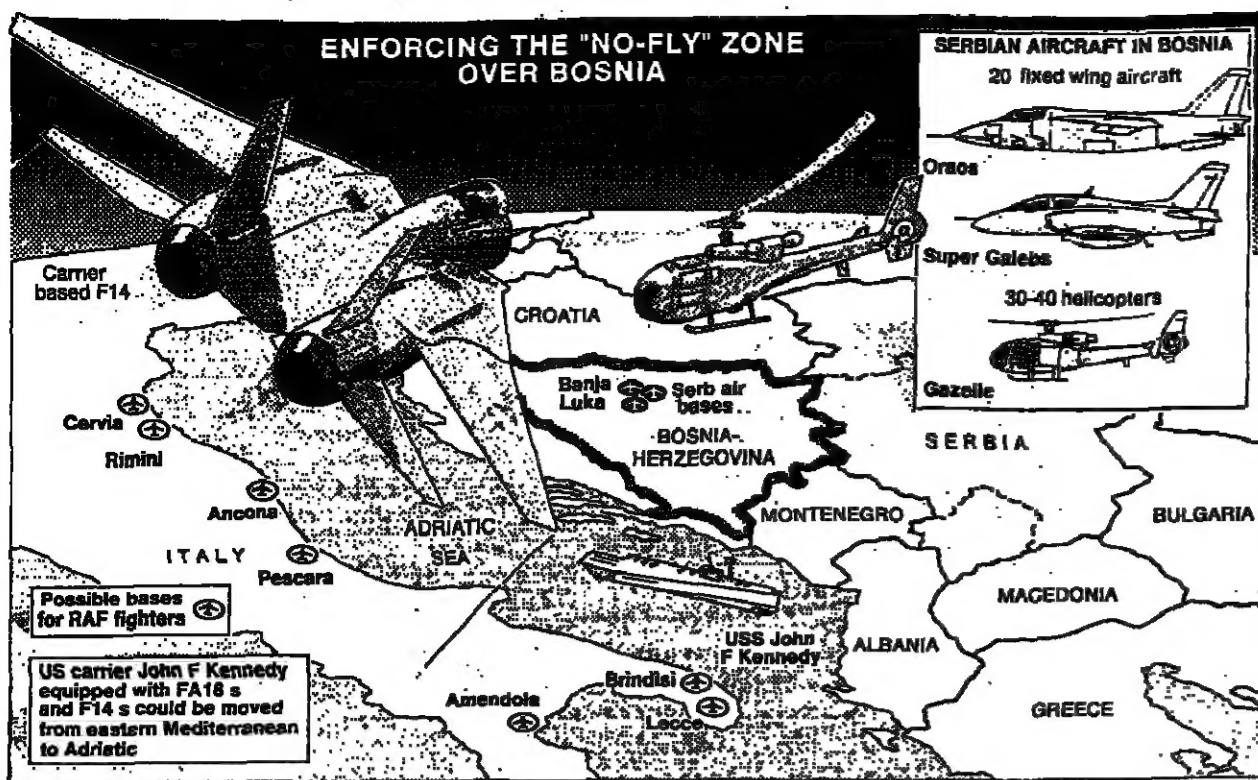
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West holds whip hand in the air but Serbs rule on land



FROM MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT, IN GENEVA

IN THE event of an enforced "no-fly" zone, the Serbian air force could not begin to match the potential Western air power that might be deployed against them. But on the ground the Serbs hold the balance of power in troops and weaponry. The strength of the Serbs, in the territory they have seized in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the arms supply line they must have developed with Belgrade, would have to be taken into account before sending aircraft in to police the skies over the country.

The United Nations forces in Bosnia amount to fewer than 7,000. Since they are there on a humanitarian mission, they are not armed with adequate firepower to respond if the Serbs sought to take revenge on UN soldiers by launching a sustained artillery attack in retaliation for shooting down their aircraft and helicopters.

The British have 2,400

troops involved in the relief operation but only about 800 are deployed at Vitez, the location of the main forward base which is 15 miles or so from the Serb front line.

The Serbs in Bosnia have about 70,000 troops, a mixture of former Yugoslav national army (JNA) soldiers and irregular militia. They are equipped with between 180 and 200 armoured personnel carriers, an unknown number of heavy artillery pieces, including 155mm guns, about 20 combat aircraft, and between 30 and 40 combat helicopters.

Compared with the Serb military might, the Croats in Bosnia have about 50,000 soldiers and the Muslims between 30,000 and 50,000. The Croats have armoured personnel carriers and anti-aircraft guns but there is no evidence of tanks and no aircraft. The Muslims, in particular, have diminished

stocks of guns and ammunition, although covert supplies get through irregularly. The four UN infantry battalion reinforcements sent to Bosnia in November cover four large sectors of the country, the British and Spanish in the south and centre, and the French and Canadians in Serb-occupied regions in the north.

All the battalions have armoured personnel carriers but they were expected principally to protect the troops from attack, not to be used in anger against the warring factions. The military fears that action against Serb aircraft could make the troops on the ground more vulnerable than they are already. They have neither anti-aircraft guns nor artillery. The heaviest weapon with the British is the 30mm Rarden cannon on the Warrior and Scimitar armoured vehicles.

The Serb air power consists of Super Galeb, which are Yugoslav-made trainers and tactical fighters, and Orions, which have a ground-attack role. Their helicopters are Gazelles, armed with Soviet missiles, and Soviet Hips. Ranged against them could be American F14 Tomcats and FA18 Hornets from the carrier, USS John F. Kennedy, and, if Britain agreed, RAF Tornados or Harrier GR3s. The latest version of the Harrier has twice the range of the older Harrier GR3s.

Nobody doubts that in a head-on confrontation the Serbs would lose. However, Serb helicopters have been taking casualties from the front, and even if it was left desirable to shoot down a helicopter engaged in a non-combat mission, it is difficult for a jet fighter, flying at up to 700mph, to target a slow-moving object travelling close to the ground.

Noose drawn tighter with warning over Kosovo

Western attitudes are hardening. The Serbs have been given ultimatums on the "no-fly" zone and the safety of Albanians in Kosovo, backed by threats of military force

BY MICHAEL EVANS

THE international noose around the Serbs, which has been hanging loosely since the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina began eight months ago, began to tighten yesterday. At the conference on the former Yugoslavia in Geneva, the Serbs were issued with several ultimatums.

They were warned that enforcement of the "no-fly" zone could follow if there were further violations of the United Nations ban on military flights. They were also told that any internal repression of the Albanian majority in Kosovo could lead to direct military confrontation.

John Major, the prime minister, said in Strasbourg that further action may be necessary. "Perhaps it is time to tighten significantly the sanctions net around the Serbs. The price of success is an end to the conflict, the price of failure might be to extend it."

Pierre Bérégovoy, the French prime minister, told his parliament that France backed the use of force if necessary to close Serb prison camps. "We have asked the UN Security Council to ban overflights of (Bosnian) territory, to permit visits to the camps and beyond such visits to close these camps, and for that it may be necessary to have recourse to military force."

The toughest words came from Lord Owen, co-chairman of the international conference in Geneva, who is leaving today for another visit to Bosnia. He called for the establishment of an international criminal court to prosecute those guilty of "ethnic cleansing" and other atrocities; authorisation by the UN Security Council to enforce the no-fly zone if infringements continued; a toughening of sanctions; and action against the Serbs if they spread the violence to Kosovo.

Fred Eckhardt, the UN spokesman for the conference, said that the language used in threatening the Serbs over Kosovo was equivalent to that in chapter seven of the UN Charter, which authorised the United States-led coalition force that drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait nearly two years ago.

Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, wanted to know how enforcement of the no-fly zone would work and what effect it might have on the UN troops in Bosnia. However, one senior British official said: "Enforcing the no-fly zone doesn't mean that we're declaring war on the Serbs. It doesn't have to involve a single soldier on the ground."

This view was not shared by Dr Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, who warned the conference of the potential dangers of sending in Western aircraft. He denied the Serbs were engaged in any bombing flights, a claim supported by the UN protection force headquarters at Kiseljak in Bosnia. Any attempt, he said, to shoot down Serbian aircraft, would be seen as "an act of aggression" on the Serbian people. "I cannot envisage how desperately we would react," he said.

Asked if the Serbs in Bosnia would attack UN troops on the ground in retaliation, he said: "I warn that, if there are any violations of people's rights to live, nobody can predict what desperate people are going to do."

□ Brussels: Sali Berisha, the Albanian president, on his first visit to Nato headquarters, said Albania was applying to join the Western alliance. He said Albania would not allow "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo.

War crimes charge, page 1
Leading article, page 15

MUSLIM PRISONERS ON THE BRINK



Home by Christmas: Muslim prisoners, above, waiting to be released from the Manjaca camp near the northern Bosnian town of Banja Luka, while, below, buses line up to take them away. Some prisoners are due to come to Britain

Bosnia detainees fly to Britain

BY IAN MURRAY

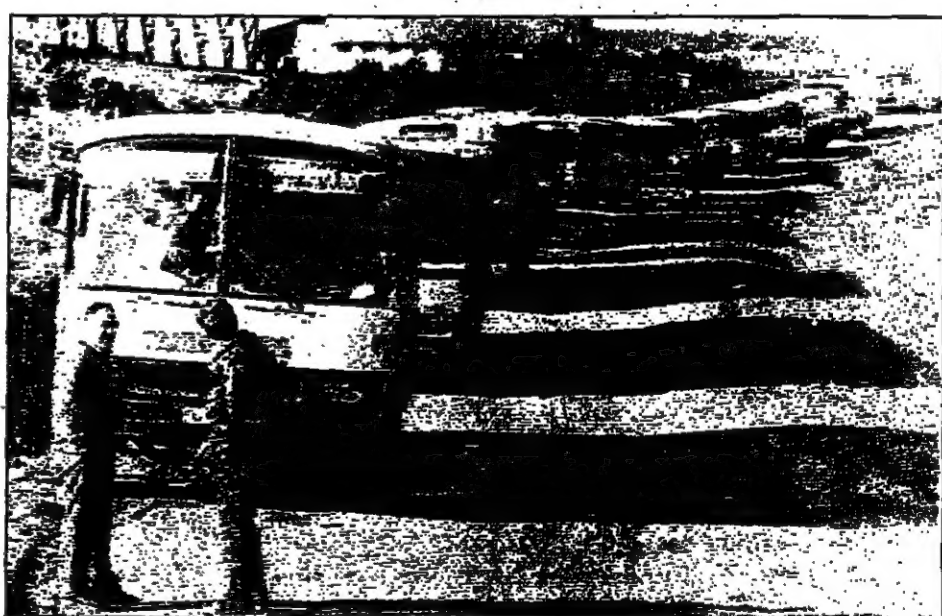
THE first batch of former detainees from Serbian prisons in Bosnia was expected to reach Britain in the early hours of today, still traumatised and emaciated after four months and more in overcrowded camps. Many were in Manjaca camp in northern Bosnia only a month ago.

A lucky few will be accompanied on the charter flight by their families, but most of the 100 or so on board can only hope against hope that their closest relatives will be traced and brought to join them.

Britain has agreed to take 1,000 of the 6,600 former prisoners for whom the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been seeking temporary protection. They are being allowed in with their dependants for an initial six months without having to go through the formality of obtaining entry visas.

The Refugee Council and the British Red Cross have arranged hostel accommodation for them in London, Cambridge and Surrey, where they can be treated and wait to link up with their families. Although hundreds of people have offered them rooms for Christmas, the organisations insist that it is better for the refugees to stay together where they have no language problems and are able to support each other, since they share and understand a common experience.

According to the Refugee Council, the government's decision on November 5 to introduce the visa requirement for most areas of the former Yugoslavia, including Bosnia, has trapped many people there, including those with families already in Britain. Visas are only obtainable at British consular offices in Belgrade or Zagreb, both of which are virtually inaccessible to Muslims from Bosnia.



"We are constantly receiving letters and appeals from people who are stranded," Susannah Cox, the Refugee Council spokeswoman, said.

The Home Office insists, however, that the visa system had to be brought in because 4,000 people from former Yugoslavia were entering

Britain as visitors every month and some method had to be found to control the influx. Of the 40,000 who arrived this year, 4,500 have applied for asylum but there are no figures on how many of the others have left. The Home Office has 500 officials dealing with applications

Colonel spells out British worries

BY MICHAEL EVANS

LIEUTENANT Colonel Bob Stewart, commander of the British troops in Bosnia, yesterday took the unusual step of publicly airing anxieties he and his men confront in trying to deliver aid and warned of potential dangers of enforcing the "no-fly" zone over Bosnia.

Croat and Muslim gunners, he said, tended to fire at anything flying overhead. "I think it's very dangerous for people to fly here," he said.

Colonel Stewart's outspoken remarks underlined the unique role he has in Bosnia. Although he comes under the command of Brigadier Andrew Cumming, based at Split in Croatia, he has the authority to make his own decisions in Bosnia.

Other British commanders, notably General Sir Peter de la Billière during the Gulf war, have acknowledged the power of the media at times of conflict. In his memoirs, *Storm Conflict*, Sir Peter said the media were of "crucial importance... I was not prepared to have a war to which the media had no access".

Colonel Stewart is able to speak out almost with impunity because it is recognised that he is the man on the spot responsible for the lives of the British troops. Malcolm Rifkind, the defence secretary, on his visit to Bosnia last week, gave his full support to the commander.

In spite of his warnings about the dangers of flying over Bosnia, Colonel Stewart pleaded for helicopters to help in "life-threatening situations" where injured soldiers might need to be evacuated. He praised the medical support he has already been given, which includes a field surgical team set up at the British base in Vitez and four Sea King helicopters based at Split.

Speaking on BBC radio, Colonel Stewart said the convoy routes pass close to the Serb front line. "That means we are frequently subject to attack, normally by mortar, artillery or small-arms fire, or sometimes by 12.7mm heavy machinegun fire," he said.

The roads were also "dreadful", in particular the mountain track to Travnik in northern Bosnia, which in places was as high as Snowdon, and another obstacle was the winter.

European parliament heckles Major

FROM TOM WALKER IN STRASBOURG

JOHN Major was subjected to angry heckling by MEPs yesterday as he tried to explain the achievements of the British presidency of the European Community to a sceptical audience in Strasbourg.

Any post-Edinburgh image Mr Major may have had of himself as a healer of Europe's rifts was shattered as Socialist MEPs joined their British Labour colleagues in castigating a largely lacklustre speech from the prime minister. The knife was turned by Jacques Delors, the European Commission president, who gave one of his more sprightly deliveries, and then by Jean-Pierre Cot, the French leader of the Socialists in the European parliament, who dubbed Mr Major "the Jekyll and Hyde" of Europe.

The prime minister was criticised on the government's failure to ratify the Maastricht treaty and a range of other EC issues, from external policy on

Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Community's internal growth plan. He also faced difficult questions on the six new Strasbourg seats Britain was awarded at Edinburgh, and strongly resisted calls to share them out through proportional representation.

Mr Major fared a little better when he departed from his notes. Under fire over an EC growth plan agreed at Edinburgh that relies heavily on private-sector funding, Mr Major told the Socialists: "If you spent less time heckling and more time thinking you would realise how valuable that was." When laughter permeated his words on the need to create new jobs, the prime minister said: "I'm surprised that some people think creating jobs is funny. Perhaps because they have secure jobs here they don't mind about the 17 million who don't."

He tried to remind Labour MEPs that John Smith had in

no small part been responsible for Maastricht's difficult passage through the Commons, but was again drowned out by heckling. "I do get used to these mindless shouted comments. That is why I feel so at home," said Mr Major.

M Cot was criticised by Gaullists and other right-wing French MEPs for giving his speech in English. He said the growth plan had been "the forgotten part of the agenda" at Edinburgh, and said Britain's tardiness in ratifying the Maastricht treaty was tantamount to "playing domestic funny games on the European scene".

This tirade prompted the prime minister into another spirited defence. "The House of Commons is a very proud place as well," he said. "I don't like to be pushed around and it won't be pushed around." Mr Major said Britain was committed to ratification "before the present

session of Parliament ends next year". This means that the government's earlier semi-official deadline of June 30 has slipped back, possibly to October.

M Delors tried to calm emotions by claiming that a further six-month delay on Maastricht (with a second Danish referendum now expected in April or May) had to be put in context. "What difference will six months make if at the end of the year we will all be together in realising the ideal of the founding fathers of Europe? We have wasted plenty of time over the last 35 years."

He denied that a two-speed Community was developing, but said that a Europe of "variable geometry" was developing. "I think we have to be frank and admit this is a possibility."

Euro-elections deal, page 6
Letters, page 15

Brittan tipped to head EC trade talks

FROM GEORGE BROOK IN BRUSSELS



Brittan: destined for one of the hottest seats

SIR LEON Brittan is likely to represent the European Community in the ailing world trade talks when the top negotiator's job becomes vacant in January.

Sir Leon, a former home secretary who is Britain's senior European Commissioner, would find himself in one of the EC's hottest seats. His hopes of securing the main foreign affairs portfolio have been denied by the arrival in January of two former foreign ministers among the seven new commissioners. But the Brussels Commission wields real power in trade negotiations, where it acts on behalf of the 12 EC governments.

The talks under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) being held in Geneva have become bogged down again after a two-year delay was ended last month by a deal on farm subsidies between the EC and America.

EC officials confirmed yesterday that the French government sent a letter to the EC team accusing Commission officials of over-reaching their instructions in the bargaining over trade in services. The talks will not meet the latest of many GATT deadlines at the end of this year.

The GATT talks have seen frequent explosive squabbles between Jacques Delors, presi-

dent of the Commission, and Frans Andriessen and Ray MacSharry, the foreign affairs and farm commissioners, both of whom will step down soon. M Delors is pondering a reshuffle of responsibilities that will reflect the hugely increased workload in foreign affairs.

The result appears likely to be a three-way split. The senior foreign affairs commissioner, likely to be Hans van den Broek, the steady Dutch foreign minister, would handle relations with other states and the Commission's input to the EC's post-Maastricht "common foreign and security policy". Sir Leon would look after trade policy, including the GATT talks, and a third commissioner would handle the talks with the four Scandinavian and Alpine states that want to join the Community in 1995. João Deus de Pinheiro, the outgoing Portuguese foreign minister, would be a strong candidate for the latter role.

One of these men — none of these portfolios is likely to end up in female hands — will also handle the EC's \$1.5 billion-a-year aid programme for eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Mr van den Broek's arrival on the scene virtually guarantees that the next Commission president, who lands the difficult task of following in M Delors' shoes, will be a Dutchman. Should M Delors get too depressed by the Maastricht treaty's delays and decide to run for the French presidency, Mr van den Broek would be on hand to replace him.

The Dutch consider themselves to have a strong claim to the top job: they are the only founders of the Community who have never supplied a Commission president for a full term. If M Delors completes ten years in Brussels, Mr van den Broek made clear yesterday that he would step aside in favour of Ruud Lubbers, the Dutch prime minister.

Gunme
to US
troops

Rabin
tows to
defeat
Hamas

Godfather

THIS C

Gunmen surrender to US and French troops in Baidoa

■ Troops are preparing to patrol the bush. Aid workers fear remote villages will be invaded by Somali rebels seeking loot

FROM SAM KILEY IN BAIDOA

GUNMEN who retired as Cobra helicopter gunships buzzed over Baidoa yesterday joined thousands of elderly men, women and children in cheering the first contingent of American and French soldiers deployed in the heartland of the Somali famine.

The arrival of about 500 armed troops supported by gunships and jet fighters, as well as statements that any Somali Jeep seen carrying heavy weapons would be "vaporised", was largely trouble-free. The only incident was when unknown gunmen fired on one another in a densely populated part of the town and injured seven people.

No sooner had the troops started to dig in around the airstrip than some US Marines came face to face with the realities of why they had been deployed. A small detachment stumbled into the cemetery outside the hospital as a grave for a two-year-old girl was being dug. Unprepared for such a sight after a week in Mogadishu, where starvation is now rare, one sergeant stared, tears welled in his eyes and he muttered a prayer.

Colonel Greg Newbold, the commander of the operation, said that after reports of a series of attacks on aid agencies and fighting between clans he had expected some

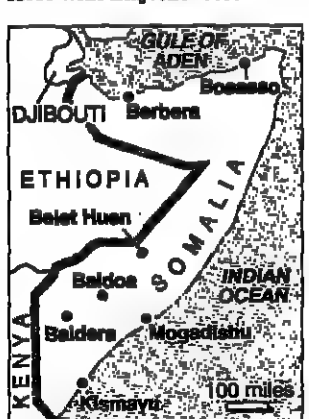
resistance to the arrival of US Marines, French Foreign Legionnaires and French paratroopers. "This is not what I had hoped, this is what I had dreamed of," he said after his men had moved in and several hundred gunmen, who had been earning thousands of dollars in landing fees from incoming relief planes, gave themselves up without protest.

Relief agencies, who had been critical of what they said was the slow pace of Operation Restore Hope in penetrating the interior, welcomed the arrival of the foreign troops. "We have had a very tough time recently and now that they are here we are delighted that we can get on with our work in feeding people and delivering health care without the constant threats and looting," said Mr Michael O'Reilly, assistant director of Concern, the Irish charity.

Ali Muhammad Rahman stood watching the incoming convoy of troops. Until yesterday he had carried his G3 automatic rifle everywhere. "I have put my gun away. I never wanted to have one in the first place and have never fired it. Now the Americans have come we can have peace and the freedom to talk and argue without the threat of being killed by brothers," he said.

Tomorrow the Marines will escort a food convoy 45 miles south of Baidoa into the bush where most of the Somali rebels "technicals", or battle-wagons, have been taken into hiding. "We are anxious to get on with delivering humanitarian relief and supporting the relief agencies," said a senior Marine. "Tomorrow's convoy is important for that reason. It will also be important because if we see any vehicle carrying a crew gun its occupants will be in for a very intense emotional experience."

Relief workers fear that the technicals will now be used to loot remote and vulnerable villages of supplies. A young officer said: "We want to send an unmistakable message to the Somalis. We are here to help this country and respect its people. But we shall meet force with majestic force."



Smile of delight: a Somali child peering past a US Marine as a convoy of American and French troops pulls up at the airport gates in Baidoa yesterday. The United Nations forces will escort lorries delivering food into the bush 45 miles south of the city

Rabin vows to defeat Hamas

FROM BEN LYNNFIELD IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI leaders yesterday weighed up their options in the fight against Hamas, the Islamic fundamentalist movement responsible for the kidnapping and murder of a policeman on Sunday.

Security forces made 100 arrests yesterday, bringing to 1,300 the number of suspected Hamas members held since Sunday. Moshe Shahal, the police minister, said it was the biggest Israeli crackdown ever against the movement, which challenges both the government and the secular nationalism of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

"We are sending a clear message. We will not allow a phenomenon in which Muslim fundamentalist extremists make it their objective to slaughter Jews," Mr Shahal said. Key cabinet members discussed the threat posed by Hamas, but several said afterwards no decision had been reached about what lies in store for suspected members of the organisation.

"Expulsion of leaders is one of the options being explored," said Oded Ben-Ami, a defence ministry spokesman. But he said such a step had to be considered carefully, as Israeli law allows deportees to challenge the government in the Supreme Court. Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister said: "We intend to strike pitilessly, within the law, against the organisation, its supporters and helpers."

Troops continued to enforce curfews in the Gaza Strip.

Syria puts a stop to exit visas for Jews

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN DAMASCUS

SYRIA has stopped granting exit visas to Jews wishing to leave, until now one of the few tangible benefits of the Middle East peace process begun last year in Madrid.

Christopher Ross, the American ambassador, has asked Syrian officials several times to explain the reversal of the new freedom granted to Jews in April, but has been informed that the Syrian government has not changed its policy of allowing them to leave. Senior US officials claimed about 1,000 Jews who have applied to leave have not been given visas. Of the original 4,000-strong Jewish community, about 2,600 have left since April, leaving 400 who intended to stay.

A State Department official said President Assad appeared to want to use the Jews as a bargaining counter with President-elect Clinton, who during his campaign criticised Syria's alleged support of terrorism.

Shortly before Washington published the halt to visas, Ibrahim Hanna, Syria's chief rabbi, said in an interview: "Over 2,500 have gone, mostly to Brooklyn in New York, where there is a large Jewish community. Almost everyone, including myself, has asked for a permit to go. Our community is in transformation."

Even before visas halted, many Damascus Jews voiced fears that if they did not leave quickly their new freedom might be withdrawn.

Delhi debates end in shouting match

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

BOTH houses of the Indian parliament were adjourned amid chaos yesterday after the hardline Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) mounted rowdy protests against the dismissal of three BJP-run state governments. The stage is now set for a long period of political uncertainty, with the BJP attempting to force the government into a general election.

The governing Congress (I) party seems to be heading for a leadership battle. Arjun Singh, minister for human resources, is manoeuvring for a possible challenge to P.V. Narasimha Rao, the prime minister, whose lacklustre handling of the Ayodhya crisis has left him vulnerable. Mr Singh, former chief minister of the huge central state of Madhya Pradesh, has been in the forefront in forcing Mr Rao into a headline stand against the BJP after the demolition of the Ayodhya mosque on December 6. Mr Rao will almost certainly not lead the party into the next election.

A drive against Hindu and Muslim hardliners belonging to newly banned sectarian organisations gained pace yesterday as police swooped on houses and offices across the country. Nearly 3,400 activists, 600 of them Muslims, have been arrested. The BJP is determined not

to let parliament transact any business until Lal Krishna Advani, its leader, is released from jail. Since the Ayodhya crisis erupted, parliament has still not managed to hold a debate on the implications of one of the biggest post-independence crises. Both houses did manage in between adjournments and shouting matches yesterday to approve a resolution naming three Hindu extremist groups as responsible for the demolition of the mosque.

The dismissal of the BJP state governments is a gamble. Mr Singh and other cabinet hardliners argued that it was a logical extension of the ban on extremist groups that sheltered behind the BJP banner. But others warned that it could create a sympathy wave that might strengthen the party in the northern Hindu heartland.

There will have to be elections within a year in the three states — Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan — as well as in the pivotal state of Uttar Pradesh, which was dismissed immediately after the mosque was razed. The elections will be a vote on the philosophy of Hinduism, which mixes Hinduism and politics despite the constitutional ban on using religion for political purposes.

Seoul acts against ballot rigging

FROM PAUL SHIN IN SEOUL

THE South Korean government has dismissed three officials in Pusan, the home region of Kim Young Sam, the majority party candidate in tomorrow's presidential election, accusing them of plotting to rig the ballot.

The mayor of Pusan, the nation's second largest city, has already been dismissed after an opposition party revealed a tape-recording of what it said was a secret meeting at which the mayor and local officials plotted campaign strategy. The tape embarrassed President Roh Tae Woo's government, which has pledged to stay neutral in the election. Last October he re-



Roh: embarrassed by tape of 'plot' meeting

signed from the governing party in a move intended to ensure election fairness.

President Roh expressed regrets over the case and said most government officials were trying hard to create a new election culture by maintaining neutrality.

The three sacked officials were the regional chiefs of the police, the nation's spy agency and army intelligence — all appointed by the government.

The former Pusan mayor, Kim Young Hwan, had admitted that he had attended the controversial meeting last Friday but denied that they had plotted to rig the election. Kim Doo Hee, the prosecutor-general, ordered a criminal investigation into the case.

The United People's party, which disclosed the tape, claimed that the secret meeting had discussed ways of stirring up regionalism and antagonising voters.

Tomorrow's voting will elect a successor to Mr Roh, whose five-year term ends next February. Private polls show that up to 30 per cent of the 29.4 million electorate remain undecided. The front-runners are Kim Young Sam, 65, of the Democratic Liberal party, Kim Dae Jung, 67, and the UPP's Chung Ju Yung, 77, founder of the giant Hyundai conglomerate. (AP)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Taipei party office is ransacked

Taipei: About 50 Taiwanese opposition protesters ransacked an office of the ruling Nationalist party in Taipei yesterday as tensions rose ahead of Saturday's parliamentary elections.

The protesters, led by four candidates of the main opposition Democratic Progressive party, stormed into the office, smashing windows and furniture before carrying off documents, witnesses said.

James Chu, a Nationalist party spokesman, accused the opposition party of waging a campaign of violence and said the Nationalists would take legal action. "Is this democracy? The people should use their ballot on election day to show that they abhor and spurn violence," he said.

Earlier, protesters clashed with riot police. Several people were slightly injured. (Reuters)

Hostages taken

Phnom Penh: Khmer Rouge guerrillas have taken 21 United Nations peacekeepers hostage in central Cambodia, a UN spokesman said. Six "blue berets" were held captive earlier this month before they were released unharmed after six days. (Reuters)

Poll violence

Nairobi: Kenya's government, alarmed by rising pre-election violence, has ordered police to shoot to kill anyone provoking ethnic unrest in President Moi's home province of Rift Valley. The first multiparty poll in 26 years is on December 29. (Reuters)

Tourism hit

Cairo: President Mubarak of Egypt has admitted that attacks on tourists by Muslim militants reduced tourism receipts by up to 35 per cent in the past few months, forcing the government to introduce security measures. (Reuters)

Christmas gift

New York: Woody Allen, in court for the first time in his custody battle with former lover Mia Farrow, has won the right to send his children Christmas presents as well as a gift to his son Sachel, who will be five next week. (Reuters)

Godfathers of Japanese business find rich pickings in Vietnam

FROM JOANNA PITMAN IN HO CHI MINH CITY

When President Bush moved one step closer to lifting the American embargo on Vietnam and normalising relations with Hanoi on Monday, many drew the initially puzzling conclusion that he did it largely because of Japan.

Until this week, when American businessmen were finally permitted to open offices in Vietnam and sign — but not execute — contracts, they have watched helplessly as the skyline of Ho Chi Minh City slowly lit up with advertising hoardings proclaiming the growing presence of corporate Japan. At the airport, Konicas welcome you to the country; on the cracked and bumpy road to Ho Chi Minh City, Ajinomoto wishes you a pleasant stay; and at night the logos of Sony and National Panasonic decorate the horizon.

American hand-wringing over lost contracts increased last month, when the Japanese government announced the re-

sumption of official aid to Hanoi after a 14-year embargo, and offered an initial commodity loan worth 45.5 billion yen (£240 million). Aid from Tokyo is expected to reach 200 billion yen a year by 1997.

In Japan, Hanoi has found the economic godfather it has been looking for since the collapse of the former Soviet Union. Japanese businessmen, who have been discreetly settling themselves into a market that many describe as the last lucrative frontier in Asia, are poised to clamber in with large-scale infrastructure projects backed by government guarantees. They are ready to set in train a pattern of investment to rival their domination of Thailand, Malaysia and other South-East Asian countries.

"We've done all our fact-finding and we feel confident that we are established in the areas where we will want to do business. Others coming in now are too late," said Shuichi Yamamoto, deputy general manager for the Sumitomo Corporation's

operations in Vietnam. Japan's vast and powerful trading companies began doing business openly with Vietnam in 1989, after Vietnamese troops pulled out of Cambodia. Before that, "we were doing business without signs outside our offices", according to one Japanese resident.

The Japanese trading companies are exporting oil, textiles and seafood to Japan and importing anything from steel and chemicals to noodles. Japanese joint-venture assembly plants are turning out cars, televisions and video equipment to cater to the country's emerging nouveaux riches. The "Doi Moi" policies — Vietnam's version of perestroika — conceived in 1986 and designed to introduce free markets and economic reforms, have already transformed the country from a crumbling communist backwater to the world's third largest exporter of rice.

The Japanese are characteristically well-prepared for the new frontier. Where other investors, notably those from Taiwan and Singapore, have rushed in with high-profile

and high-value investments and in many cases had their fingers burnt, the Japanese have been moving in cautiously, adopting corporate Japan's famously long-term views. One group of Japanese businessmen, overheard in one of the city's four Japanese restaurants, were discussing business 50 years hence.

Japan's businessmen have plenty to drool about. Takeshi Ohara, general manager in Vietnam of Tomon Trading Company, said: "The people are extremely hard-working, their literacy rate is above 90 per cent and they are eager to learn. The country has oil and other natural resources and will soon become an excellent consumer market for Japanese products which will be increasingly manufactured inside Vietnam."

But foreign investors face enormous obstacles. The infrastructure is a shambles with electricity always in short supply. Trains are barely faster than bicycles. The one road linking Ho Chi Minh City to

Hanoi is precariously potholed and harbours are too shallow for large container ships. The government is still working on its legal framework and investors are constantly challenged by changing regulations and a tendency to renege on contracts. Corruption, which has recently been exposed at ministerial levels, is another concern. To make matters worse, there is still no golf course and the quality of the sushi is charitably described by the Japanese as "deplorable".

□ Hanoi: Two years after the end of special trading privileges with the former Soviet Union, Vietnam is expected to post a trade surplus in 1992 of \$75 million (£47 million), the trade ministry said yesterday. The ministry said exports this year would reach \$2.46 billion compared to \$2.38 billion in imports, an export rise of 19 per cent over 1991.

The best export performers were crude oil, rice, seafoods, coal, rubber and coffee. Vietnam's main imports comprised capital equipment and chemicals. (AFP)

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Muslim women have been driven from their homes ...

A hateful burden

When Safa Konakovic feels the movement of the unborn child in her womb, the memories of her five-month ordeal as a prisoner in a Serbian military brothel inevitably return to haunt her.

"This baby is not a part of me, it is like a stone in my body," said the multiple rape victim, now recuperating at Sarajevo's Kosevo Hospital. "As soon as I deliver this child the doctors had better take it away. I will kill it if I see it."

Her testimony and that of scores of other former female inmates from ten Serbian brothels has begun to expose the widespread practice of sexual abuse over the past eight months in Bosnia where Serbian forces are estimated to have raped at least 14,000 and as many as 30,000 Muslim and Croat women, some of them held for months as forced prostitutes.

Mrs Konakovic, 30, said her ordeal began last May when Serb forces occupied the village of Sokolac where she lived with her parents. As part of their process of ethnic cleansing, Serbian forces drove out all the Muslim villagers except for some young men held as prisoners of war, and 13 females, including a six-year-old girl, who were kept at the village school as concubines.

"They would normally rape us at two sessions every day, once at 11 o'clock at night and then again in the early hours of the morning. They were usually drunk and beat us constantly. My body was the colour of my nightdress," she said,

**Richard Beeston in
Sarajevo talks to a
pregnant and bitter
survivor of a Serbian
military brothel**

indicating her bright blue hospital gown. For her, one of the most disturbing aspects of her abuse was that many of her tormentors were from her own village, some of them Serb boys she had gone to school with. She said the Serbs also took delight in forcing their Muslim male captives to rape the women as well.

"It was so shameful for them and for me. I just closed my eyes and hoped my life would end," she recalled, adding that initially she wanted to take her own life, until she became driven by hatred and the need to expose the men who had violated her.

She and the other inmates were released at the end of September, by which time all of the women were five months pregnant, a calculated move by the Serbs to ensure that the pregnancies could not be aborted. "The Serbs told us we should give birth to Chetniks (Serb fighters) because they were the only ones with a right to live in this land."

Although her ordeal was at first thought to be exceptional, Bosnian human rights

investigators claimed this week that the practice was widespread and systematic, with 53 documented cases of former rape victims who are pregnant and estimates of many more too afraid or ashamed to come forward.

"It is often difficult to collect evidence because many of the victims were killed and those who survived are often teenage Muslim girls too afraid to testify," said Azra Snaicovic, a member of the Bosnian government's state commission investigating war crimes, which will forward its evidence to three main international teams also gathering evidence about alleged Serb atrocities.

Nevertheless, she has put together a damning dossier of abuse, which gives details of several military brothels, in particular the Vilina Vlas Hotel in the mountain spa town of Visegrad, where several hundred girls are believed to have been raped and many killed, and at a second location at the Sonja Motel in Vogošća, where about 90 women were held.

One particularly valuable eyewitness to the methods employed by the Serb forces is Borislav Herak, a captured Serb fighter, who has confessed to visiting the bordello in Vogošća a dozen times. He also admitted killing six of his rape victims and dumping their bodies on the Zuc hill north of Sarajevo on the orders of the brothel-keeper, Miro Vukovic, who complained that there was not enough space to accommodate the constant arrival of more women prisoners.



... and become the most vulnerable targets of the Serbs

Marlin Fitzwater, the only White House press secretary to be appointed by two presidents, cleans out his desk of memos and memories

The president's mouth sadly shuts up shop

In the White House briefing room, half a dozen reporters stretch out on the seats and enjoy a post-prandial snooze. They are their newspapers' B-team. The top political writers decamped long ago to Little Rock and Bill Clinton.

In the West Wing, a few doors from the Oval Office, Marlin Fitzwater, Mr Bush's press secretary, bemoans the interminable transition. "It's terrible," he says. "There's a sense of rejection, and no one likes that. Also, it's all about endings, not beginnings."

From Lafayette Square comes the sound of carpenters hammering nails into this administration's gallows: the stands for President-elect Clinton's inauguration. Next door, secretaries are packing the 110th box of files for transfer to the national archives. For perhaps the first time in ten years Mr Fitzwater's in-tray is empty and his telephone virtually silent.

Above four television sets are five docks showing the time in Washington, Peking, Paris, Somalia and — Mr Fitzwater being a humorous fellow — his birthplace of Abilene, Kansas. On the walls are the accumulated memorabilia of the longest-serving senior White

House staffer, the first press secretary ever appointed by two presidents and one of the most popular.

There are diverse hats from this particular baldy's huge collection, framed front pages proclaiming Reagan-Bush election victories and the Gulf war triumph, pictures of Mr Fitzwater meeting Boris Yeltsin, Margaret Thatcher, the Pope and Mikhail Gorbachev.

Another photograph shows Mr Bush and Mr Fitzwater on the White House lawn after the president's election defeat. "I have been very proud to have you at my side," Mr Bush wrote on it. "Now let's get big in this tawdry business." After so many years as America's global spokesman, Mr Fitzwater dreams of drifting lazily in the middle of Chesapeake Bay on a boat called an albin trawler.

But on this grey afternoon, the lag-end of a remarkable Republican era, Mr Fitzwater does lower his guard a fraction. He recalls, with a chuck-

le, Neil Kinnock's disastrous White House visit before the 1987 general election. The Labour leader had emerged to pronounce the meeting a great success. Within minutes Mr Fitzwater had contradicted him, denouncing Labour's unilateralism.

He denies deliberately skewering Mr Kinnock. "He didn't understand how the system here worked ...

He was trying to suggest President Reagan was closer to his position than he was. I felt I was just correcting the record."

He acknowledges too that Mrs Thatcher had suffered Mr Bush's resolve.

when they met in Colorado hours after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. "The president wanted to defend Kuwait, but others around the world were not quite so sure. A lot of people were saying, 'Let's let them have a few oil wells, let them have a piece of Kuwait.'"

She strengthened his conviction by arguing that the Iraqis would invade Saudi Arabia if they were permitted to keep Kuwait.

Mr Fitzwater has given 848 briefings, each a political and diplomatic minefield. Even now he gets stagefright because "one wrong word and you regret it for years". His worst error was calling Mr Gorbachev a "drugstore cowboy" who made arms control promises he could not keep. "I especially regret it now because I think President

Gorbachev is perhaps the greatest government leader of the past 50 years, a man of enormous courage."

Mr Fitzwater has sat in on seven summits, more than any other American, and outlasted five Soviet or Russian counterparts. The most memorable summit was Malta in 1989 when a storm trapped the American and Soviet delegations on their respective ships for half a day and one night. At one point he faxed a message to the press corps' hotel offering "an exclusive presidential interview to any reporter who can get to the USS Belknap within the next 15 minutes", and three to any who swam.

He remembers Mr Bush deciding to call Boris Yeltsin on the day of the Soviet coup in August 1991. Mr Yeltsin said he was trapped in the Russian White House with troops approaching. The president asked if a statement of support would help. Mr Yeltsin said yes, Mr Bush tore to the hotel where a CNN television crew was staying, and soon the coup leaders, Mr Yeltsin and Mr Gorbachev, who was under house arrest in the Crimea, were watching him throw all America's weight behind the deposed leader.

Television has made a global celebrity of the mild, self-deprecating Mr Fitzwater. In an Istanbul rug shop last year the proprietor greeted him as, "White House talker! White House talker!" In the Churchill Hotel in London he was accosted by a group of Kuwaitis chanting: "The liberation of Kuwait has begun." He considers the words with



Bald eagle of the White House: Marlin Fitzwater gave 848 press briefings, each one a political minefield

which he announced the start of the Gulf war to be his single most memorable line. His worst moment at the White House came in 1983, when the bombing of the US Marine barracks in Beirut killed 299 people.

Mr Fitzwater expresses wonderment at his experiences, such as being assaulted by a former President of Tunisia who had inexplicably mistaken him for his errand boy; preparing lunch with neighbourhood women in Lech Walesa's kitchen; and watching Václav Havel, the Czech president, tell Mr Bush, two weeks before his country voted to split in two, that "the

dynamic flow of history is about to pass me by."

Previously with the treasury before joining the White House press department, Mr Fitzwater was appointed press secretary to the then vice-president Bush in 1985. Mr Fitzwater became President Reagan's spokesman in the middle of the Iran-Contra furore of 1987 and rejoined President Bush in 1989. They are fast friends. "We've been through so many experiences," Mr Fitzwater says.

"We both enjoy the ironies of life. When people are bowing and scraping, overcome at meeting the president, he'll look over at me and wink."

The economy, he says, lost Mr Bush the election — "We were never able to address it in a way that was acceptable and meaningful." But Mr Fitzwater, 50, worries that someone younger could have done a better job than he. "I love George Bush so much it would be painful to think I didn't do enough to help him win."

Last March he abruptly left for a Caribbean holiday in what the press reported was a state of total exasperation at the inept campaign. There was a "grain of truth" in that, he admits, but insists the story was much exaggerated.

Mr Fitzwater, a divorced father of two, will write a book

and has signed up with a lecture agency. He has been offered corporate vice-presidencies, but he will instead set up his own government-relationships firm in Washington.

But he will have one last task before he leaves the White House. In a cupboard of his office hangs an embroidered bulletproof waistcoat. One pocket is stuffed with notes that each press secretary has left his successor. None has ever divulged their contents. Observing this mysterious tradition, Mr Fitzwater duly left himself a note in 1989. Now he must write another.

MARTIN FLETCHER

NOILLY PRAT



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FRENCH, DRY AND MISUNDERSTOOD.

Listening to the noise from the boys

Radio 4's 'Men's Hour' has stirred a fierce debate about masculinity



Boy talk: Tom Robinson, presenter of The Locker Room

(with or without kumquats) was well in order.

On the question of penis surgery, one was sharp about the disgust in some women's letters: had not he been putting up with hernia on menstruation for years without complaining?

There is a heady sense of a dialogue building up, a vacuum being filled. As I walked into Mr Pilling's office this

week, he was playing back the latest batch of answering machine messages. All were interested and full of suggestions for the second series, except one furious, unreconciled Duke of Edinburgh soundalike — who barked: "What a lot of rubbish! Must be organised by the Women's Hour caper. Never been in a perishing locker room in their life, those bodes"

His particular target was last week's discussion on men's groups. This was interesting because, although it ran over the familiar ground about "getting in touch with your emotionality", for balance, Mr Pilling had invited an excessively macho character from Manchester called Alan Beswick. He kept snapping out unsupportive remarks like "What do you mean, a desire for community?" and rubbished self-discovery as a suitable pastime for a grown man. "Coom on, what does it matter who you are?"

In fact, one of the series' unexpected strengths has been the determination of Robinson, in particular, to challenge knee-jerk liberalism. "My big regret," he says, "is the discussion on homosexuality." Referring to the programme's guest, Adam Mars-Jones, the critic, Robinson explains, "We really should have got a red-blooded homophobic in the studio to make Adam work for it. Mr Ordinaire, that's who we want."

Those who cringed — though with a certain delight, a sense that something not at all regrettable was happening on Radio 4 — along with the chap who could not bear the idea of touching another man will agree that Mr Ordinaire can be riveting listening. "I'm

sorry but I just... can't... Let's get off the subject!" said the victim, audibly wincing.

The most powerful moment, for Mr Robinson, was the discussion on whether a real man has to be able to fight physically. He, a slightly ashamed coward, faced a night club bouncer, a Falklands para and a convicted armed robber. Whereon the para nearly cried, and admitted he thought of his mum while he was at Goose Green. The armed robber said "It wasn't a real gun. If anyone had said, 'Piss off, you're not having my money,' I'd have gone away," and the bouncer admitted his terror of killing someone. "It's the worst feeling in the world when their head hits the floor."

It is a new kind of public talk, this man-to-man frankness. I did not realise how new until near the end of the report on penis implants. We suddenly heard the shrill, girly voice of a nurse in the operating theatre recovery room, faintly patronising the patient. Among those interested, sympathetic, supportive male voices, it came as a rather shocking intrusion. For a moment, I think I understood the Garriok Club.

Which may not have been what the programme intended at all.

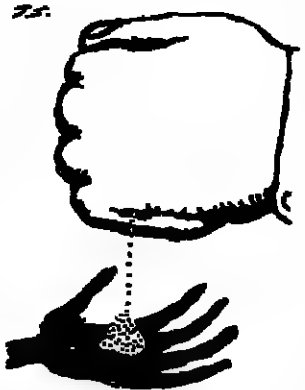
LIBBY PURVES

Starved for life

AS THE lorries start to trundle into the hinterland of Somalia there is hope that the grain they carry will put some flesh on the skeletal figures of Baldo. But even after the bacteria in starving guts have returned to normal — so that the digestion is working again — and the bones are covered, the ordeal is not over for the victims. There is evidence that prolonged starvation, particularly in growing children, results in long-term physical and mental changes.

It is difficult to judge the extent of irreversible damage inflicted on children, because it is unusual for those who have been starved to be able to grow up in a land of plenty; an expeditionary force does not alter the underlying problems. Such evidence as there is shows that head size and height never entirely catch up after a period of starvation, even though nature does compensate to some extent, delaying puberty and allowing growth to continue to a later age than usual. Intellectually the children, once into adult life, are less bright than better-fed contemporaries, and less well co-ordinated.

Not surprisingly there is a higher level of disturbed

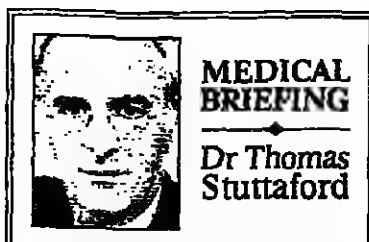


behaviour in children who have been starved. Much of this may be a result of associated emotional deprivation, but anatomical differences, including fewer brain cells and less sophisticated connections have been demonstrated in those starved in childhood.

Initially too high a proportion of the weight gain is from increased fat deposits rather than from lean muscle. Muscle takes longer to regrow and so strength is slow in returning.

Vitamin and mineral deficiency particularly affects the eyes, skin and bone development and as long as there is a deficiency any infection which would be trivial in the well fed may be fatal in the starved. The eye problems caused by vitamin A deficiency can damage or even destroy the cornea and there may be as a result a permanent loss of sight.

Avoid rash decisions



MEDICAL BRIEFING
Dr Thomas Stuttford

CHRISTMAS is not always an easy time for a child with eczema. Eczema is due to many different factors: exposure to allergens or irritants, and sometimes particular food or emotional tension, may precipitate an attack. Staying with granny may have its compensations, but the atmosphere in a strange house may be as loaded with emotional tension as it is with house mites that lurk in the fitted carpets, and dandruff from alien cats and dogs.

This year, some parents will have an additional worry. A recent press report has decried the use of steroids in the treatment of eczema, and advocated instead homeopathy and herbal remedies. Some herbal remedies are effective, but are also potentially very toxic.

Views on homeopathy are divided but what is certain is that, correctly used, in selected cases the local application of steroid creams and ointments can bring contentment to a child who would otherwise be bleeding and raw from scratching, and nearly demented from sleeplessness. Those who denigrate steroid preparations must be too young to remember the misery which eczematous children suffered before they were available.

The first line of attack in the battle against eczema is to discover what it is which is making it worse and then attempt to remove, or reduce, exposure to the cause, whether it is irritant clothing, the wrong temperature, inter-

current infection, some particular food, or contact with pets.

Although steroids are widely used, the risks of side effects from them are not high. But it is a mistake to rely solely on them. Emollients, applied frequently, are useful in keeping the skin moist and in reducing irritation. They may be all that is necessary and are free of side effects.

Emulsifying agents can be used in the bath and as a substitute for soap: even the plainest unscented soap may contain irritants. Skin rendered thick and scaly by chronic eczema can be treated with salicylic acid ointment and coal tar.

When steroid creams are needed in addition, the old adage still applies: the least potent preparation, at the lowest strength which is effective, is the prescription of choice.

When the initial preparation is ineffective, the immediate reaction should not be to substitute one of greater potency, but to change to another preparation of the same strength but

from a different manufacturer. Steroid creams and ointments are classified into four groups: the mild, such as hydrocortisone 1 per cent, the moderately potent such as Eumovate, the potent such as Betnovate, and the very potent, of which Dermovate is the best-known example.

Children are particularly liable to suffer side effects and for this reason the more potent preparations are used only under careful supervision for a very short time. Simple hydrocortisone is always the preparation of first choice in children but even that should not be used, except under strict medical supervision, for prolonged periods.

People of any age should avoid using potent preparations on the face, or any other area in which the skin is very fine and sensitive, for more than a few days at a time. It is possible to produce a rash which is worse than that which prompted the initial treatment, and one which is very resistant to further medication. The skin is thinned and looks not unlike that of a sufferer of acne rosacea with its inflammation, dilated blood vessels and red papules.

Eczema can all too easily become infected, in which case concurrent treatment with antibiotics will be necessary. In some areas of the body, a combined steroid fungicide preparation is essential as steroid creams without fungicidal back-up can exacerbate the situation.



Smokers' arteries

MARLENE Dietrich was often photographed smoking. In the era when Miss Dietrich was at the height of her powers the cigarette was still a symbol of sophistication and sexiness. While it may be uncertain what smoking did for her sex appeal it is certain that in her case it caused a particularly painful condition, peripheral arterial disease. Arterial surgery was needed to save the famously beautiful legs from gangrene and amputation.

with hypertension, are considered the most important factors in the development of narrowing of the arteries leading to or within the legs.

The symptoms of arterial narrowing in the legs are well known: the patient can only walk a short distance before developing a severe cramping pain, usually in the calves but also sometimes the thighs; after a pause, the pain goes and the patient can walk on again. There is also loss of strength in the legs: Miss Dietrich even fell on one occasion. As in her case, the restricted blood supply results in slow wound healing so that any trivial scrape can become a persistent ulcer.

Blood pressure should be treated, cigarettes abandoned but sooner or later surgery, which is now often very effective, will ultimately be needed.

Remember when you felt down?

Fading memory may not be a sign of age, but of depression and diet. Liz Gill reports on fitness training for the brain

Depression, rather than age, may have the most damaging influence on memory. New research suggests that memory lapses are not necessarily a concomitant of growing old and that in some areas performance might even improve with age. But memory is affected by emotion, and a lot of the memory loss of which older people complain is due to depression.

"Depression is extremely damag-

ing. You don't pay attention, so you don't process the information in the first place, and even if you do you cannot then make the cognitive effort to retrieve it," says Dr Michael Gruneberg, the co-editor of *Aspects of Memory* (published by Routledge).

Dr Elizabeth Maylor, a research scientist with the Medical Research Council's Applied Psychology Unit in Cambridge, sent questionnaires to 100 former *Mastermind* contestants aged between 24 and 78 (about a third were 50 or more), and found that older contestants did better on general knowledge questions than younger ones. They were slightly slower in the specialist rounds, but remained proportionally as accurate.

Dr Maylor, who presented her work to the British Psychological Society's London conference this week, says: "It was very cheering to find that the bad effects of aging are not inevitable."

"There is evidence from other studies that there are people who do not decline like the rest of us, and there are also people who, by practice, can retain a high level of performance in certain areas although they might be declining in others."

In the context of memory, Dr Maylor suggests that older people may organise their knowledge better, or develop better search strategies to apply it. She believes her preliminary findings suggest men-

tal exercise — reading, doing crosswords and puzzles, maintaining a lively curiosity — pays off just as physical exercise does.

Dr David Benton, a reader in psychology at University College, Swansea, believes that taking care of the body may also help the memory. His experiments with students found that higher blood glucose levels — as a result either of breakfast or a glucose drink — produced a 10 to 15 per cent improvement in performance during memory tests. "This isn't a revolutionary cure for Alzheimer's, but it does suggest that our ability to synthesise the neurotransmitters necessary for memory function may be affected by diet."

"It also has every-day implications in that if you are doing tasks involving

memory you should make sure you keep blood glucose levels up." The key element in retaining knowledge is interest, according to Dr Gruneberg. "If you are interested in something you will pay attention in the first place and make the effort to process that information."

In one of his research projects subjects were assessed on their interest in football and then asked to listen to the football results: the greater the degree of interest, the more scores they could recall later.

"If you have a large store of information on a particular topic new pieces of information about it are also more meaningful to you and therefore easier to process. If you are already fluent in a language, ten more new words are easier to remember than if you have just started learning from scratch."

"With general knowledge it's a case of being interested in a lot of different areas. These people are the sort who will read a newspaper from cover to cover. But why you become interested in something in the first place or how you can



develop it in a new area we don't really know. It may be biological, it may be cultural."

Good general knowledge is to some extent a measure of education and culture, Dr Gruneberg points out. He sees little merit in being able to simply remember every fact without depth, and cannot see any worth in simply memorising more and more facts.

He believes there is a correlation between memory and intelligence. "Some intelligence tests measure our ability to remember a span of digits read out at the rate of around one a second. The average is seven. The correlation, though, is not so strong that if someone does badly in such a test it automatically means they are unintelligent."

The speed with which we can summon up facts from our memories varies according to the individual. "It's like running. Some people are just faster than others, we don't really know why," Dr Gruneberg says. "But there are personality factors as well. You have to be able to handle stress. Some bright people just freeze under pressure,

and their memory goes. That's what can happen in exams."

One of the questions memory experts are still probing is the "tip of the tongue" phenomenon: how do you know you know something when you cannot actually remember it?

Dr Gruneberg says: "One theory is that the answer to a question has lots of different attributes and you might know some of them but the others are blocked. The blocking often happens when the information is well-known but has not been used for some time — such as when you are trying to recall the name of an old school friend. You can picture them, you might even know the first letter of the name or how many syllables it has, but you can't get the rest."

"The other explanation is that when you are asked a question you make a decision very quickly about whether you should know the answer or not. So if you're asked 'Who is the prime minister of Great

Britain', you feel you should know, the answer must be there, which you wouldn't feel if you were asked about an unfamiliar place."

So far, Dr Gruneberg says, no limit to the human memory has been established. "If it does have a finite capacity we haven't found it yet. We just seem to be able to take in more and more information, until we die."

Indeed, forgetting is sometimes more of a problem than remembering. Brian Highley, who has compiled more than 100,000 questions for the board game *Trivial Pursuit*, says: "When I first started I used to go to bed and the questions and answers would be swirling round and round in my brain. Now I make a conscious effort to forget them. I go down the pub or play with the kids. Otherwise I'd go mad."

"There is a memory man who has learnt all the answers to the 6,000 questions in the current edition, but he still insists on putting an S on the end of *Pursuit*. You'd think he'd remember the name of the game."

Giving birth on an egg

The results of a survey are providing food for thought in hospital labour wards

One of midwifery's hardest and fastest of rules — that women in labour should not be allowed to eat — has been overturned at the Jubilee Maternity Hospital in Belfast, as the result of a research study.

In straightforward cases where no complications are foreseen, at least 75 per cent of nearly 3,000 deliveries every year, mothers in the Jubilee's labour ward are now encouraged to take light food such as toast, scrambled egg, sandwiches, ice cream, yoghurt, jellies or fresh fruit during labour.

According to the Belfast survey, on average births have been about an hour and a half quicker on the new regime than on the old one, which permitted only toast and tea in the very early stages of labour, and merely sips of water thereafter.

The survey also found that the women who were allowed to eat did not require pain relief, such as Pethidine, until a much later stage in labour, and also required less Syntocinon, a contraction stimulant. As a result, their babies were generally more vigorous at birth.

Half the 44 mothers in the study, which was carried out by a midwife, Angela Flanagan, in association with Dr Kieran Fitzpatrick, an anaesthetist, were permitted a light diet, while the other 22, as a control, stayed with the old rule.



Well-fed: if women eat in labour, babies respond well

"Apart from the average shortening of labour by about 90 minutes, which makes a lot of difference to the mother, almost all the babies of the eating mothers scored higher on the immediate post-natal Apgar tests than the babies of the fasting group. So the outcome for the babies was better too," Mrs Flanagan says.

The Apgar scoring, done at one minute and five minutes after delivery, is on such indicators as heartbeat, respiration, colour, muscle tone, responses and the crying reflex.

As a result of a paper Mrs Flanagan presented to a provincial conference of the National Board of Nursing, and an interview on Radio 4, the Jubilee has had letters from other hospitals throughout Britain and Ireland, enquiring about its new technique. Another study, embracing about 1,000 births, is about to begin, to provide a better statistical base. "It would be nice to think we would get some funding," says Mrs Flanagan, who did most of the work on the original study in her own time.

She believes the extent to which the sips-of-water-only rule persists is a hangover from the days when general anaesthetics were common, as opposed to epidurals. The three large Dublin maternity hospitals have varying rules on eating. At the National Maternity it is strictly drinking only. The Rotunda allows a mother tea and toast very early on. At the Coombe, it is drinking only, with the comment "Food is best avoided in case an anaesthetic is required."

But the results of the Flanagan study, and the change of practice at the Jubilee, are welcomed by one senior midwifery researcher, Cecily Begley, academic tutor at the Faculty of Nursing at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

She is not surprised that nourishment during labour should prove beneficial. "After all, in energy terms, a long labour is rather like running a marathon," Mrs Begley says. "Most people — even men who don't face giving birth — will have experienced the awful head-achy feeling of keto-acidosis, expending too much energy on too little nourishment."

ROBERT R. RODWELL
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Smoke-free zone: Lord Archer's guests get the message

Having accepted an invitation to dinner some time ago I was somewhat surprised when my hostess rang me the day before, to say that as she was trying to make her house "a no-smoking zone" she would appreciate it if neither I nor my partner smoked at her home. Too taken aback to say what I really felt, I explained we were former smokers and we would be happy to see her.

Only later was I overtaken by a fit of almost teenage fury. It was all I could do not to go round to the local supermarket, buy twenty Woodbines (which shows how long it is since I last smoked), light up, ring her up (preferably at the last minute) and say: "Sorry, started smoking again. See you around."

What made her request particularly galling is that she is a vegetarian and thinks nothing of ringing before she comes round to tell us she does not eat meat. The message is "Cook me a special meal." By wanting to lay down rules both as hostess and as guest she, like so many other health freaks, wants to have her carrot cake and eat it.

No smoke without fury

Is it unreasonable to ban invited guests from lighting up?

If she had had an excuse as cunning as Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare's I wouldn't have minded so much. He also discourages smoking in his flat, even among the politicians and show-business luminaries who have been attending his three Christmas parties, held this week. "It's the pictures," he explained. "Over the years I've seen such beautiful pictures ruined by years of smoking. No one has refused my request not to smoke but I no longer have to make it, since everyone knows my flat is a smoke-free zone."

I didn't notice any rare Impressionists hanging on my hostess's walls. Friends' reactions to her request were varied. "It's her house," said one. "She can ask what she likes." Not a week after extending the invitation, she can't. Not at the last minute, when all her smoking guests have already signed up the babysitters. "Surely she'd let a guest smoke in a special

room like the Victorians," was one reaction from a friend who could hardly believe her ears. No. If you wanted to smoke, however addicted you were to nicotine, you had to go out into the street.

"It's your fault. You should have stood up for yourself," said another. As a non-smoker, it would be only the principle I was standing up for — but anyway, as a guest I don't expect my every whim to be satisfied. "Well, there are the risks of passive smoking..." was another point raised. Well, perhaps. But there's no question of anyone dying of lung cancer if a guest occasionally

smokes a couple of fags in your house. And anyway, if she was so keen on healthy lungs, why on earth live in the centre of London?

No, underlying her request was a hidden message, a message that was more of a power trip than a health trip. It read: "I don't want your filthy habits here."

Of course, if laying down the rules for guests has suddenly become socially acceptable behaviour then I should really be jumping on the bandwagon. But my request would be rather different. "Just one thing," I'd say as guests came through the door. "I'm making my house a smoke-free zone. So could you not get quite as pissed as you did last time?"

Or, a deadly-conversation-free zone. "If you could refrain from banging on about how acupuncture cured your backache or how good organic vegetables are for you, I'd be ever so grateful."

I'm no Moroccan host. When

visitors come to stay I do not slip out of my bed and sleep on the floor in the kitchen while they luxuriate under my duvet. But I do have some principles about how to behave to my guests.

If they get drunk, I tolerate it. I just don't ask them again. I am always irritated when they ask for a special diet but I never let it show and say, grinning my teeth, what a jolly change it is to have to cook in a different style. If they smoke their heads off, I simply throw the butts in the bin before I go to bed and open the windows in the morning.

Generally, I try to see my guests are having as good a time as possible before I allow myself to have a good time. But the unwritten contract is that when I'm with them they will do the same for me.

Next time we're asked to acquiesce to this request by these friends, I'll put my own form of bullying into action. "Of course we won't smoke," I'll say. "But you do know that my partner and I don't eat vegetables, don't you?"

VIRGINIA IRONSIDE
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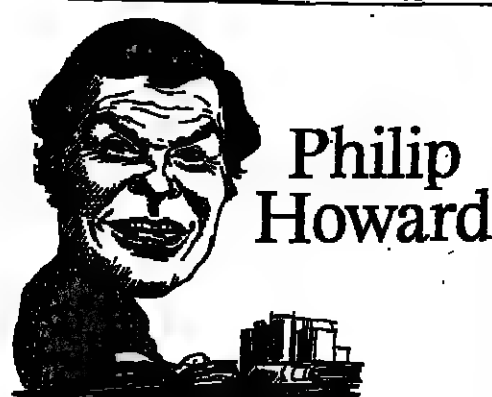
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Philip Howard

■ Vicars are sinking in the social scale if they can't be murder suspects

The corpse lay in the library. Dr Black had a gun in his hand, a knife in his back, and a rope around his neck. But in fact, as should have been obvious to anybody using the little grey cells and elementary powers of deductive elimination, he had been poisoned.

The manufacturers of Cuedo, the whodunit board game that has evolved into a television game show, are making one of those little changes that can be interpreted as significant social indicators. This is to be the Reverend Green's last Christmas. Next year he is going to be replaced as one of the suspects in the game by a trusting businessman, thought to be more relevant and a likelier murder suspect in British society of the naff nineties.

Amateur sociologists can interpret this as a sign of the declining status of the church, with modern vicars more likely to wear sandals and sing "Kumbaya" at you to the guitar than to make up numbers at country house parties with the biffing and boffing set. The Victorian vicarages have been sold, and the parson is part of a team ministry, and lives in a modern council flat.

The irresistible rise of the English clergyman from a place below the salt to the top table has been reversed. Clergymen were promoted as suitable companions for dinner (and so interesting suspects for murder in crime fiction) by the novels of Jane Austen, Trollope and the other Victorians. Their social demotion, now recognised by Cuedo, has been blamed on everything from the secularisation of society to the pauperisation of the clergy, and from the safety net of the welfare state to the Gadarene rush of the Thatcher years, which radicalised middle-of-the-road clergy. A vicar these days is more likely to be running a soup kitchen and criticising the government than sharing pheasant and social chat with the nobles.

In any case, the notion that crime fiction of the golden age, as stereotyped on cardboard by Cuedo, ever represented the real world is nonsense. If the Rev Green is deemed out-of-date at the modern country house party, how about Colonel Mustard with his silly moustache, who is likely to be from the Essex Irregulars these days because of the army's wider recruiting policy, and in any case is in short supply because of the defence cuts? Miss Scarlet is an offensively sexist image in the nineties, and, if it is authenticity that Waddingtons are after, Professor Plum should be replaced by a plump, left-wing lecturer in economics worried about his tenure.

In fact, authenticity has little to do with the old-fashioned murder mystery boiled down to its basics by Cuedo. The Rev Green always was an improbable suspect. The bible of such matters lists 200 clergymen in crime fiction as victims, sleuths, suspects and local colour, but not one as murderer. The morality of these fictions was meticulous middle class, and it was considered daring of Agatha Christie to make so Establishment a figure as a doctor the villain in *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*. Father Brown is a detective and metaphysical fisher of men. The Rev Leonard Clement (a mudge-mudge name) in *Murder at the Vicarage* is innocent (sorry, Agatha). Dorothy Sayers has two good vicars: the Rev Theodore Venables in *The Nine Tailors* and the Rev Simon Goodacre in *Busman's Honeymoon*, clerical names almost as plausible as Trollope's canonicals.

But if the clergyman as murderer is your bag, you must journey to the exotic shores of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* or Ellis Peters's medieval monk-business unravelled by Brother Cadfael. The butter may have done it, though that is cheating the formulaic class structure. Lords and ladies can do it. Even the narrator has done it. But when it comes to crime fiction, dear reader, you can be sure that the vicar did not do it. Nevertheless, Cuedo is silly to drop the Rev Green. The British are still fascinated by peccant vicars, as a glance at the pop press proves. And it is bad news for the thriving British businessman that he is now considered so old-world a figure that he can join the other obsolete stereotypes of the murder game for the denouement in the billiards room.

The new president's choice of aides shows the lasting influence of old liberal ideas, argues Irwin Stelzer

Clinton's backroom boys

Left-leaning, mildly protectionist, green and unlikely to worry too much about a short-term increase in the budget deficit or a decline in the dollar. That about sums up the economic team President-elect Bill Clinton has assembled to help him keep his campaign promise to revitalise the American economy.

The Clinton crew seems set to provide a short-term stimulus, although its leader publicly wonders whether the recent recovery makes such a "kick start" necessary. That's where Lloyd Bentsen, the Texas senator named as Secretary of the Treasury, and Leon Panetta, the California congressman who will head the budget bureau, come in. Fearful that a deficit-raising spurt in spending would spook money markets, Mr Clinton picked reassuringly grey, 71-year-old Mr Bentsen largely in the hope that Wall Street would see him as a conservative voice. Grateful for Mr Bentsen's past willingness to dole out tax benefits to purchasers of Wall Street's stocks and bonds, the

financial community applauded his selection.

Leon Panetta was also picked to be director of the Office of Management and Budget to smooth the way for a short-term stimulus. Much admired for his command of budget details and a history of worrying about budget deficits, Mr Panetta can help persuade his former colleagues in the House that higher deficits will be only temporary, soon to be covered by higher taxes on the rich and on foreign corporations, and rapid growth. The annoying fact that this is probably untrue will be ignored during the hyper-frenetic first 100 days of the new administration.

The green tinge, and with it more regulation, will come from Carol Browner, named by Mr Clinton, at the urging of Vice President-elect Al Gore, to head the Environmental Protection

Agency. Most recently in charge of environmental affairs in Florida, Ms Browner was before that a Gore aide and the darling of the activist environmental lobby. Businessmen familiar with Mr Gore's book, *Earth in the Balance*, and his apocalyptic view of the state of the world's environment, are bracing themselves for a new wave of regulations and, possibly, taxes on fuel use and pollution emissions.

The protectionist bent will be provided by Laura Tyson, the University of California professor named to chair the Council of Economic Advisers. Ms Tyson's new book *Who's Bashing Whom*, caught Mr Clinton's eye, to the joy of House majority leader Richard Gephardt, the Missouri congressman who has long pressed for protectionist measures to relieve pressures on the domestic automobile and other industries unable to meet

international competition. Ms Tyson is more subtle than Mr Gephardt. Beginning with the proposition that "free trade is not necessarily and automatically the best policy", she moved on to favour "countervailing subsidies" to key industries damaged by competition from foreign companies that receive subsidies from their own governments. (Airbus beware.) Such tit-for-tat can easily lead to a trade war. And not one likely to be frowned on by the nominee for Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown.

Until now chairman of the Democratic Party, Mr Brown has no known ideological commitment to free trade. He is a mechanic, and will see his job as implementing his boss's programme while keeping as many industrial constituents as he can in a happy mood.

Hovering over all of these appointees is Harvard's Robert

Reich, the lawyer-turned-lay-economist who is slated to be Secretary of Labor. Mr Reich, who claims to be Bill Clinton's oldest friend — they were Rhodes Scholars at Oxford together — has had a profound influence on his new chief. That has its advantages: after a long flirtation with protectionism, Mr Reich has become a free trader. It is now his view that the nationality of a company matters less than where it locates its high-paying jobs. And the nation that wins the competition for those jobs will be the nation with the best educated, best trained workforce, he says. The business community hopes he will recognize that a hospitable climate for capital is an equally important factor in attracting industry and jobs.

But they worry. Mr Reich is no believer in pure entrepreneurial capitalism, and derides

as a myth the belief that "the little guy who works hard, takes risks, believes in himself" will succeed. He thinks "the Triumphant Individual", driven by unfettered profit-seeking, is a thing of the past, consigned to the dustbin of history by "collective entrepreneurialism", a system in which labour, government and business recognize their interdependence.

Mr Clinton, it must be remembered, has made it clear that he plans to be his own chief economic policymaker. That is why he so ostentatiously took the chair at the Little Rock economic summit, making notes, asking questions about the need for stimulus, the outlook for exports and the possible efficacy of a cheap dollar. The details of what he will distill from the advice of his new team can only be guessed. But the broad outlines are clear: activist government, more spending, more taxes, more regulation.

The author is resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, Washington.

Inside the mind of a cop-killer

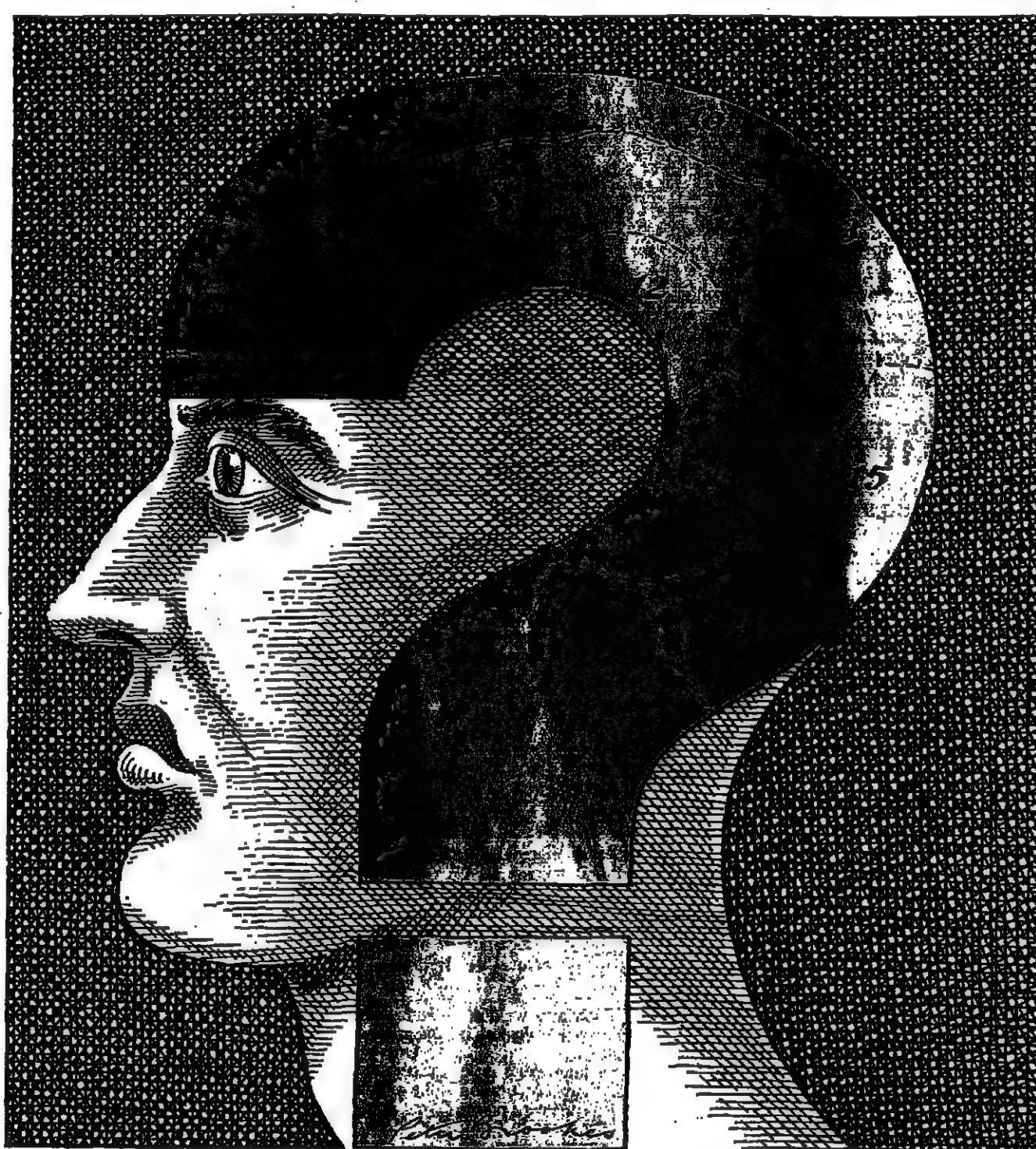
Bernard Levin asks what evil feeds the unquenchable fire of rage

The apprehension, trial, conviction and sentence of Nicholas Vernage is, I think, something more than the imprisonment of an exceptionally savage triple murderer and the feelings of the bereaved. The widow of the policeman killed by Vernage, when asked whether she favoured capital punishment, understandably said yes, and it would be difficult for even the most committed abolitionists (I was one) not to have more than a moment's unease at what he did, though in this case it would be absurd to think that such a man might be deterred by the thought of the hangman.

We can also say that such a creature is — must be — mad, though that will not get us much further, apart from the fact that he did not plead insanity at his trial; but assuredly, what he did (and did it laughing) is so far out of ordinary human understanding that we are reduced to falling back on the nearest explanation, which is that he was deranged. The trouble with that argument is that it immediately begins to grow in several directions: is it mad — literally mad — for a criminal to hate policemen so much that he vows to kill one and carries out his vow (Vernage nearly killed two more) and if it is, does the almost unbelievable violence with which he carried out his threat make it more or less likely that he is mad? And then, what is madness, if not that which most people do not do and would never do in any circumstances? That is an inadequate definition, but I have never come across a better one.

The next, inevitable, word comes to the surface: Vernage is an animal. But no animal would behave like that. His impulses have no directing control in his make-up; hate and violence, neither of which he can restrain when in frenzy (not that he wants to be restrained), act as a creature which has no understanding at all would. What, for instance, are we to make of his murder of his former girlfriend; certainly the world has often found love turning into hate, and many rejected partners have killed the thing they loved. But Vernage, after accusing her of failing to visit him in prison, stabbed her 16 times. In what part of the spectrum from wholly sane to entirely mad are we to put that?

Or: when Sergeant King approached Vernage on suspicion of having stolen goods, Vernage stabbed him four times in the front and four times in the back, and was running away, as any



murdering criminal naturally would, when he ran back to the officer and stabbed him again, which any murdering criminal naturally would not do.

But we cannot shrug off Vernage, even after that, as a subhuman figure; witness what he wrote on the wall of the cell in which he was being temporarily held after his arrest for Sergeant King's murder: "Sergeant King was killed, stabbed to death in red, boiling and unbearable blood." The mystery deepens,

because that is not the language of an illiterate or someone mentally defective. It is, however, the language of a man with an unquenchable fire of rage burning inside him.

It will have blood, they say: blood will have blood; Stones have been known to move and trees to speak; Angels and understood relations; By maggot-pies and thoughts and roots brought forth The secret's man of blood. What is the night?

In normal circumstances, whatever they might be, we can find an equation: a petty thief, a wife-batterer, a confidence trickster, a killer caught in the act of breaking and entering — we can measure the degree of criminality and, with our very rough and ready system of punishment, decide what do with the criminal in the dock, from letting him off with a caution, to sentencing him to a double-digit stretch in prison. But what can we do that has any

meaning with a man like Vernage? Where is the magic yardstick that can measure such a figure? With what instrument can we get into his head, to understand him or — even more unlikely — to make him understand what he has done?

There will be, there have already been, arguments to the effect that such a man has no right to live after what he has done — an eye for a dozen eyes; other arguments, from more practical sources, leave out the

morality of the decision but say that it is a counter-productive waste to leave him alive; the costs of keeping him, watching him, feeding him, could be spent a thousand better ways.

But what does such a creature represent? What have we allowed into the world that it turns out to be Vernage? Long ago, there was a photograph — it became a kind of icon, and I am sure many people reading this will remember it — of a gorilla that had gone mad. It had rushed into the sea; the photographer shot it standing up to its waist in the water. The eyes, the stance, the immobility made an unforgettable scene, but it made something else as well: the rage and the pain intertwined. But we are not animals, and probably we are not mad, either.

Heat me these irons hot; some would say that Shakespeare need not have bothered; such pseudo-men are born with the irons sizzling inside them. Not so, I think. Still, I do not know how such a man becomes what Vernage became, so we must ask the impossible question: how does such wickedness and hate get into such men? It is no use, none at all, to say that Vernage was born like that; nobody is born like that, because nobody is born like anything — we grow into what we become, and while we are growing into it we have choices, and we take some of these and reject others. Why did Vernage take the wrong ones? The usual fools will say that it is all the fault of society; he stabbed, and went on stabbing, because of our capitalist system — it meant that he had had a deprived childhood, poor fellow. But I had a deprived childhood, too, yet I have never stabbed anyone.

We are responsible for our actions, and if we go on saying that we are not, we shall sooner or later find ourselves in a society in which Vernages can be found in every street.

Blood hath been shed ere now, The olden time, Ere human stature purged the gentle weal; And since too, murders have been perform'd Too terrible for the ear: the times have been, When the brains were out, the man would die, And there an end; but now they rise again, With twenty mortal murders on their crowns, And push us from our stools: this is more strange Than such a murder is.

All we want for Christmas

WHAT would our boys in Bosnia like for Christmas? A visit from John Major may not be at the top of everyone's list, but memories of the prime minister's trip to Saudi Arabia before the Gulf war are encouraging those who believe a similar excursion to Bosnia would be a morale-booster for British forces — not to mention a public relations coup for Major.

Both objectives were achieved when Major, complete with gas mask and "noddy suit" — to protect him from chemical weapons — went to the Gulf nearly two years ago. While Downing Street is saying nothing about a possible repeat performance in Bosnia, powerful voices around Whitehall would clearly like to see Major follow in the footsteps of Malcolm Rifkind, whose Bosnian trip last week begins to resemble something of a dry run for the PM.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, chairman of the Tory defence committee, believes such a visit would be the perfect Christmas tonic for Britain's 2,000 troops stationed in Vitez. "As was shown in the Gulf, John Major is very good at talking — and listening — to people who are doing hazardous

jobs. I think it would be particularly useful for him to consult with soldiers who are actually on the ground," he says.

A Major visit would also please Patrick Robertson, founder-member of the Bruges Group and public affairs consultant to Action for Bosnia. He says: "If this acted as an initiative allowing the Bosnian people to defend themselves — in the lifting of the arms embargo — then it would be most welcome."

Meanwhile, Paddy Ashdown, who returns to London from Bosnia today would not comment on any possible visit — presumably not wishing to steal the thunder from his own, action-packed adventures.

Downing Street remains silent too. "As you can imagine," a spokesman says, "if there were any such plans, the last thing we would do is talk about them."

Safety in numbers

SEPARATIONS do not come more civilised than the Prince and Princess of Wales's, who yesterday had lunch at Anton Mosimann's (very expensive) Knightsbridge dining club. It was a long lunch — 12.30-4pm — and, according to



DIARY

Mosimann's spokeswoman, it was "convivial".

Romantics will be disappointed. The 100 members of the Wales's staff who chaperoned the couple at the traditional Christmas lunch, with turkey and Christmas pudding, did not witness a reconciliation. The prince and princess sat on separate tables. Nothing unfriendly here, the spokeswoman insists, it was just so that they could "talk to as many people as possible."

MICHAEL Howard grows ever greener. On Monday the environment secretary was spotted nattering at the parliamentary alternative energy group's Christmas party. The Labour MP Frank Cook, the group's chairman, says there were "intakes of breath and of genuine pleasure. He seemed very interested — although he is too intelligent to

appear disinterested — which shows that energy is now in its rightful place on the agenda." It is the first time Cook remembers a secretary of state dropping in. "Normally we are visited by under-secretaries like Colin Moynihan. It didn't bring him much luck."

Scream test

THE open animosity between Thames Television and Carlton, the company that takes over weekday broadcasting to the London area on New Year's Day, continues apace as the new organisation shows little sign of taking on more than a handful of Thames' 1,300 staff. But Carlton has, unwittingly, added further insult to injury by advertising its new channel on two big billboards directly opposite Thames' Euston Road studios.

"It really is vile," says Roy Addison, spokesman for Thames. Carlton insists the sites were booked by their advertising agency on the basis of frequency of traffic. Yesterday, afternoon, however, the offending hoardings were being reposted — with a Smirnoff campaign. Could peace be breaking out?

Casey's lament

HAVING resigned as Bishop of HAVING in May after admitting he



HAD IT not been for the actor James Fox, right, the Balkan Relief Fund's money-raising evening in London on Tuesday would have been unremarkably sombre. Following the serious after-dinner speeches, Fox breezed through two Shakespeare sonnets, *Masters of War* by Bob Dylan, left, a Robert Southwell carol and, curiously, John Betjeman's *Invasion Exercise on the Poultry Farm*. Fox admits the bawdy Betjeman poem was not particularly relevant. "I was trying to provide a little light relief."

had a 17-year-old son, Eamonn Casey must have hoped his problems were behind him. His prayers, however, have not been answered. Annie Murphy, the mother of Casey's son, is to burst into print next spring with *Forbidden Fruit: The True Story of My Secret Love for The Bishop*. The book is being

co-written by Peter de Rosa, himself a Catholic priest for 14 years. A confidentiality agreement as binding as the confessional means de Rosa can say nothing until the book is published in April but the publisher promises it will "tell the story of how she fell in love with Eamonn Casey ... of her fight to

keep (their son) Peter ... of her terrible treatment in a convent after her son's birth ... of Casey's ascent to the highest circles of the Roman Catholic church ..."

De Rosa is more forthcoming about his latest, perhaps not unrelated work, *Vicars of Christ*. It examines "the dark side of the papacy. I emphasised the sins and the excesses, the inquisition." Although an ex-priest for more than twenty years, de Rosa sees himself as a "loyal Catholic". His writing is guided by a desire to "explode the Catholic myth. When the Pope issued the new catechism he referred to 'unchanging' Catholic teaching. There is no such thing as unchanging. I am trying to help Catholics face the 20th century."

We have to bring the Church into the 20th century.





TIME TO ACT

The Serbs must be stopped before it is too late

Foreign ministers arrived in Geneva yesterday in a very different mood from the start of the London conference four months ago. Disillusioned, angry, determined, they no longer have hopes that the murderous Serb advance in Bosnia can be halted by reason, negotiation and sanctions.

The horrors of the detention camps, the callousness of the daily slaughter in Sarajevo, the cynical deceit of the Belgrade government and their placemen in Bosnia: all have swelled a wave of international revulsion and increased the pressure to confront the Serbian fighters and halt their attacks on the Muslim victims. Three meetings in three days — in Stockholm, Geneva and at the Nato council in Brussels today — have finally brought it home to the Europeans that the fighting in their midst is a cancerous evil that is spreading its poison throughout the continent. Planning for war has already begun.

Western leaders nevertheless still show great reluctance to contemplate intervention, which in the view of key governments such as Britain and France would be bloody, prolonged and ultimately ineffective. Their hesitations have been echoed by Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance, the two Geneva mediators, who yesterday called for more time to give diplomacy one last chance. They argue that even a decision to enforce the "no-fly" resolution would be counter-productive: attacks on Serbian helicopters would spell the end of all negotiations, turn Serbian guns on the United Nations forces, and sabotage the humanitarian convoys just when their vital supplies are most urgently needed by the besieged and starving Muslims.

Their views carry weight, the more so as Lord Owen has himself been a former advocate of force, and Mr Vance believes the situation so grave that the world is on the brink of a new Balkan war. The two negotiators have also identified a very real question which has to be answered before any change in the UN rules of engagement is contemplated: what are the objectives and

limits of force? How prepared are western forces, especially and crucially the Americans, to make available the ships, planes and intelligence to respond promptly to violations? And are only the Serbs to be targeted? What about sorties by Croats?

Those are questions for the Nato council today. Western leaders have been too cautious for too long. Enforcement of the "no-fly" zone should not be postponed. The visible reluctance of the West even to seek the necessary Security Council authority looks to Serbian commanders more and more like appeasement. Every flight, be it only a helicopter sortie, in defiance of the UN resolution undermines the authority of the UN and emboldens the Bosnian Serbs to target the international forces now feeding their enemies. The West may want to wait until after the Serbian elections in the hope that Milan Panic can oust President Milosevic. But Nato should today assume that within a week western forces must be prepared for military engagement.

Already the Geneva conference has moved the argument from diplomacy to retribution. France has called for the use of force to liberate those still in camps. America has gone further: Lawrence Eagleburger has named the men, including Slobodan Milosevic — once a friend of this former ambassador to Belgrade — that Washington wants to put on trial as war criminals. The volte-face is striking, reinforcing the Europeans' jaundiced view that American policy over Yugoslavia fluctuates from inaction to over-commitment. Certainly Washington has been goaded by the nagging question of US television networks: if Somalia, why not Bosnia? But Mr Eagleburger is right: the men who ordered the rape and slaughter of civilians are guilty of atrocities and should be pursued for them.

All that is for the future. The Americans do not yet have forces in Bosnia. That omission does not, however, invalidate their conversion to a more activist stance. One by one the European governments are following suit. It is high time.

SUNDAY MUDDLE

The Government should stand up and fight for free choice

The European Court's judgment on Sunday trading yesterday has done nothing to settle the conflict over seven-day opening. Shoppers in the English shires may ask why a court in Luxembourg can rule on when they should be allowed to visit their local supermarket — and what that says about subsidiarity. More to the point, they may wonder whom this curious intervention in national custom has benefited and what it was ever expected to achieve.

The councils involved in the action have interpreted the judgment — that the Shops Act of 1950 does not contravene the Treaty of Rome — as an affirmation of restrictions on Sunday opening hours. But the European Court has simply stated the obvious: that Sunday closing was no more prejudicial to imported goods than to British. In practice, the issue is unresolved and still awaits a firm legislative hand.

To be fair, the court said in its July interim ruling that the hours of business kept by British shops ought to be settled domestically. But in the year since supermarket chains began the Sunday rebellion, the government has wilfully passed the buck — upwards to Europe, downwards to local authorities. Ministerial decisions have been postponed because Whitehall was "waiting for Luxembourg", while councils have been left to enforce the Shops Act as they wish.

Many authorities seem content to see the law flouted; a handful have tried to prosecute stores defying the Shops Act and will continue to do so encouraged by the Attorney General's remarks yesterday. Other councils have been scared off by the Court of Appeal's judgment that they would be liable to compensate shops for loss of profit if their injunctions were overturned. In effect, the rule of law has been decentralised.

In its current state the act permits the purchase of pornography on a Sunday but forbids the sale of the Bible. Its penalties are

too small to deter the larger stores from opening on a Sunday. This legal mess must now be resolved by decisive political action.

English Sabbatarianism draws on a deep spiritual well. There are still many Christians who believe, as Henry Ward Beecher put it, "that Sunday is a sponge to wipe out all the sins of the week". But liberalisation would not outlaw observation of the Sabbath; rather, it would make its observance a matter of choice. Outside theocracies, it is not for governments to dictate private spirituality. But it is certainly their task to widen consumer choice.

The Tories' dithering over Sunday trading reflects their grim folk memory of the 1986 deregulation bill, the only measure to be defeated in the Commons in Baroness Thatcher's 11 years as prime minister. The Sabbatarian lobby remains strong in Conservative circles and the close vote on Maastricht will not have encouraged John Major and Kenneth Clarke, the Home Secretary, to take a legislative gamble in the forthcoming Shops Bill.

But public opinion has clearly hardened in favour of liberalisation. Stores are opening on Sundays because they have a market to serve, a market that Mr Major should endorse unequivocally. Provision should of course be made for shopworkers who prefer not to work on a Sunday, and the "conscience clause" offered by some retailers to their employees is a sensible model. But the bill should not discriminate against larger stores, as some have suggested.

Talk of a free vote, or of a vague legislative framework to be fleshed out by MPs, is merely mouthed. Such devices are appropriate to issues of conscience, but, on this question, the pro-market, Conservative position ought not to be in doubt. The Shops Bill should call for deregulation. It should be passed with a three-line whip. It is time for the government to stand by its own rhetoric.

DON'T GET BACK

The Beatles should stay where they belong — apart

Yesterday the Beatles were at it again: not making magical music but wrangling in the High Court over who held copyright in some unpublished photographs taken a quarter of a century ago. More tantalising, though, was the hint dropped by Paul McCartney earlier this week that the three remaining members might regroup for a BBC documentary series.

Even though the suggestion has cropped up with predictable regularity ever since the Beatles disbanded in 1970, it still causes hearts to leap. The Beatles were the most creative band of the Sixties and their music has been the most enduring.

Twenty years after the release of the Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album, its re-release in 1987 leapt to number three in the charts. The marketing of Beatles music on compact disc has been formidably successful, though whether a whole new generation has been seduced, or whether their elders are upgrading from vinyl to CD is unclear.

Either way, the three surviving Beatles need never work again to lead eminently comfortable lives. Mr McCartney could

probably live happily ever after merely on the song-writing royalties of one classic hit, "Yesterday". The Sunday Times list of the Top 300 richest people in Britain shows him, at number 18 as the country's highest-earning musician, with a net worth of £390 million. George Harrison makes it into the list too, at 271, worth £25 million.

So, though a comeback could be lucrative, it is hardly necessary, and it could be disastrous. Mr Harrison was savaged by the critics when he played one concert at the Albert Hall earlier this year. Rock music, like tennis, needs constant practice, and Mr McCartney is the only member who has kept himself in shape. A regrouping of the Beatles could be as poignant as the sight of Bjorn Borg trying to take on younger and fitter opponents with his old wooden racket.

And it would play havoc with people's memories. The Beatles induced the same warm, almost worshipful feelings as do Marilyn Monroe and James Dean. It is no accident that both actors were cut down in their prime. The Beatles stopped when they were ahead. They could never recapture that spirit now. Let their CDs speak for them.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E2 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Shape of Europe after Edinburgh

From Lord Bethell, MEP for London North West (European People's Party (Conservative))

Sir, The EC's 12 heads of government took many excellent decisions last weekend, but it was a mistake for them to suggest, contrary to the wishes of most MEPs, that the European Parliament's seat must be in Strasbourg.

The monthly removal of the EP's entire staff, equipment and members from Brussels to Strasbourg has long been a scandal. It costs our constituents money and makes us less effective in representing their interests.

In Strasbourg we have no EC diplomatic corps, press corps or civil service. All of them live in Brussels. A few visit us in Strasbourg from time to time. Strasbourg is short of flights, taxis and hotel space and often foggy. We will not be able to carry out our main task, supervising the EC Commission, so long as we stay there.

Governments and national parliaments may decide what they like, but they will never be able to monitor the EC's civil service on a day-to-day basis. If the EP has a task, this must surely be it, to get to grips with the unelected Commission in the same way that MPs control Whitehall here.

If we are to do this, we must be based where the Commission is, not condemned to wander from city to city.

Yours etc.,
NICHOLAS BETHELL,
73 Sussex Square, W2,
December 14.

From Mr Toby Horton

Sir, Peter Riddell ("Major's chance to rebuild", December 14) rightly concludes that, after Edinburgh, the debate on Europe within the Conservative party can draw to a close. Two years ago, in a foreword to a Conservative Political Centre publication, I suggested that the Brussels agenda then unfolding ran against the grain of Conservative thought, with consequences that could have been entirely destructive.

The outcome of the Edinburgh summit has put these fears to rest and offers an evolution of Europe around which Conservatives can unite. Not for the first time, creative political thought by Britain has restored stability to Europe.

Yours faithfully,
TOBY HORTON
(Conservative parliamentary candidate, Rother Valley, 1992),
Whorlton Cottage, Swainby,
Northallerton, North Yorkshire,
December 14.

From Mr Roger W. H. West

Sir, Am I right that it has now become central that the EC leaders should ratify the Maastricht treaty as quickly as possible, not because the treaty has any particular merit, but because until it is ratified, their attention cannot be given to the other far more important problems which currently face the European Community?

Yours faithfully,
ROGER W. H. WEST,
104 Gravel Walk,
Farnington, Oxfordshire,
December 14.

Qualified harvest

From the Chairman of the Farmers Club

Sir, Your agriculture correspondent states (report, December 5) that farmers are reaping a bumper harvest from the ERM (exchange-rate mechanism) edit. That is true for those with grain. On the other hand those who use grain to feed livestock are now faced with much higher feed costs and no increase in the value of their produce.

That, together with increasing pressure from the public for high welfare standards different from the rest of Europe's is making pig, poultry and egg production increasingly difficult to operate in the UK. One farmer's gain is often another farmer's loss.

Yours faithfully,
R. P. VOELCKER, Chairman,
The Farmers Club,
3 Whitehall Court, SW1.

From Mr Michael Scott

Sir, Your agriculture correspondent gives the impression of a prospering agriculture with a rosy outlook. At the risk of being branded another whingeing farmer I would draw his attention to the fact that the sterling devaluation has in no way compensated for the significant yield reduction of cereals in the eastern counties this year.

The efficient, effective and above-average arable farmer will be significantly disadvantaged under a scheme designed to maintain the rural population of mainland Europe and militate against employment on a permanent basis on the larger units of the United Kingdom.

We have seen nothing yet of the effect of CAP (common agricultural policy) reform in our rural infrastructure — a matter of the gravest concern to those of us involved in the industry.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL SCOTT,
Austhorpe, Ewerby Thorpe,
Sleaford, Lincolnshire.

Royal separation: marriages not all made in heaven

From the Canon Treasurer of St Paul's Cathedral

Sir, Simon Jenkins ("A boost for the prince's party", December 12) says that marriages are too easily begun, encouraged by the churches which do so little to discourage unsuitable ones.

As one who was in the business of conducting marriages, in four parishes, for over 27 years before taking up my present post, I am at a loss to understand what parish clergy are supposed to do. They have no legal right to decline any marriage, however "unsuitable", unless a divorce has occurred for either or both of the partners.

English law requires the clergy to marry any parishioner, even the unbaptised, together with Jews, Muslims and Hindus. If they or their partners have a residential qualification and are willing to make the promises.

Many clergy are deeply troubled in conscience about this. They do all they can to prepare couples for marriage and it seems strangely unfair to blame them when there is nothing that they can effectively do to change the law, short of disestablishment, which few of us desire.

That would be a steam-hammer with which to discourage the hard nut of English indifference to the matter.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL SAWARD,
6 Amen Court, EC4,
December 12.

From Mr David C. C. Watson

Sir, If it be true, as Simon Jenkins alleges, that "the churches do so little to discourage unsuitable marriages", the fault must lie with the clergy, not the Book of Common Prayer, which warns that holy matrimony is not to be "taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly... but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God: duly considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained" (e.g. children, to avoid fornication, mutual help).

But in many wedding services today children are not mentioned and the scriptural command that wives should "obey" is hardly ever included. When the Maker's handbook is disregarded,

is it surprising there are so many breakdowns?

Yours sincerely,
DAVID WATSON,
31 Harold Heading Close,
Chatteris, Cambridgeshire,
December 12.

From Mr K. R. Rollinson

Sir, Simon Jenkins is wrong to say that divorce "is only a stigma to those who believe that unhappiness is good for the soul...". Divorce is bad and is stigmatised principally when there are children.

Those who have made a mistaken marriage and have children must find a way of learning to live together by mutual self-examination and sacrifice so as not to affect those children. Like any contract marriage has to be worked at to succeed. And succeed it can. To abandon it betokens a failure of character and is not acceptable from those to whom we look for example.

Yours faithfully,
K. R. ROLLINSON,
Orchard House, Abington,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire,
December 12.

From Mrs M. T. Pollen

Sir, Has the time come to amend the marriage vows? "For better, not for worse" would surely be more realistic.

Sincerely,
THERESA POLLEN,
Selwood House, Mells,
Frome, Somerset.

From Mr Christopher Moncrieff

Sir, Whilst foreigners and their heads of state are undoubtedly impressed by, and interested in, all the trappings of our ceremonial monarchy and our history, many must regard our obsession with our past as being the sign of a nation that looks backwards, not to the future.

Surely, most sensible people in this country wish only for a head of state who carries out his or her duties in a professional and dignified manner, safeguarding the interests of the nation and representing us on the world stage. The present Queen has always done this. What is required now is an organisation designed for

the 21st century, not the 19th.

The paraphernalia of royalty is most jealously guarded by the courtiers and advisers, whose own elevated status in our class-obsessed nation is inextricably tied to the continuing existence of an imperial monarchy.

If we can have a professional head of state, with a supporting organisation that is cost-effective and efficient in all areas of contemporary life, I think most people in the country will be perfectly satisfied. If the royal family are able to provide the solution there is no reason to be rid of them.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER MONCRIEFF,
The Gallions,
Radwell, Bedfordshire,
December 12.

From Mr D. B. Hadley

Sir, That the tabloids had a hand in the separation of the Prince and Princess of Wales is plain. What chance had the royal couple to mend their marriage with a pack of news-hungry hounds baying at their heels?

Those who think as I do will not forget their behaviour. When the cry from the press goes up to oppose legislation to prevent intrusions into people's private lives (and I speak not only of the lives of the royal family and politicians), we shall remember and will urge our MPs not to leave the precious gift of freedom in such careless hands.

Yours faithfully,
D. B. HADLEY,
White Hill House,
Upham, Hampshire,
December 13.

From Sir John Acland

Sir, In your leading article ("For the prince", December 16) you mention the relatively recent pedigree of many royal traditions. It is worth noting that the monarch's right to be consulted, to encourage and to warn, which you also mention, is of similar pedigree. It was formulated by Bagehot himself.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN ACLAND,
Strydom, Broadclyst,
Exeter, Devon,
December 16.

Academic tenure

From the acting General Secretary of the Association of University Teachers

Sir, The welcome clarification on security of academic tenure made by Professor Graham Zelikoff (letter, December 14) did not, however, respond to the suggestion in your editorial (December 4) that the abolition of tenure was directed at improving efficiency in the university system, and that performance-related pay will introduce much-needed flexibility.

Since the terms of the Education Reform Act, with senate amendments approved by the Privy Council, have generally come into effect in only the last couple of months, these provisions cannot be the cause of the remarkable increased university productivity.

The staff student ratio has moved from 1:9 to 1:13 between 1979 and 1992, with hardly any increase in cash resources.

In contrast with this signal increase

in productivity, university salaries have only just exceeded the rate of price inflation (by 4 per cent over the decade) compared with the average non-manual earnings rates which, in the same period, have increased by over 50 per cent.

What other profession, tenured or not, recruits staff with higher degree qualifications in their late 20s and subjects them to three or four years of rigorous probation before appointing them to positions from which they can be dismissed for good cause, redundancy or — following the Page case (report, December 4) — for no reason at all, provided notice is given in accordance with the contract?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN AKKER,
Acting General Secretary,
Association of University Teachers,
United House,
1 Pembroke Road,
Notting Hill, W11,
December 15.

Child abuse

From Professor Emeritus Thomas Stapleton

Sir, I must disagree with the opinion of Professor Emeritus and Dr Marion Gray (letter, December 12) on the law's role in cases of sexual abuse of children by parents.

If we are to have any hope of reducing the incidence of child abuse, and more especially sexual abuse, it should be de-criminalised. Such behaviour arises from poor emotional development early in life. People who commit such actions are mentally sick and require treatment, not imprisonment.

This is not in any way to condone their behaviour: it may indeed be necessary to detain them in a psychiatric institution. But to send them to prison does not cure them; it also leads to despair in the abused child when a major part of his or her emotional support (however "abnormal") is removed.

Yours sincerely,
THOMAS STAPLETON
(Professor of Child Health,
University of Sydney, 1960-83),
The Foundry Cottage, Lane End,
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire,
December 12.

Paying later

From Mr Blake Lee-Harwood

Sir, Alan Fisher's article of December 8 concerning retroactive liability for pollution ("Guilty before the law" — but quite legal at the time) contains a fundamental misconception of the issue of contamination. The urgent need to finance the decontamination of polluted sites by making the polluter pay is not about generating costs "that our economy can ill afford" but concerns the allocation of that cost.

If the polluter avoids the cost, it falls to the polluted to pay for the damage. Either way, there are implications for jobs and the economy, irrespective of whether the water or tanning industry picks up the bill.

We can, however, avoid the mis-

Hepatitis treatment

From Dr G. M. Dusheiko

Sir, The statement by Dr Thomas Sutcliffe (Body and Mind, December 8) that interferon has little or no effect on hepatitis B is unnecessarily discouraging. Several large, placebo-controlled trials have shown a beneficial effect of alpha interferon. Approximately 40 per cent of patients with chronic hepatitis B respond to treatment with this complex anti-viral and immune-modulating agent.

Although not ideal, this figure is a small but notable improvement, as many patients with active chronic hepatitis B would progress eventually to irreversible cirrhosis.

Alpha interferon may not be the final answer for the treatment of chronic viral hepatitis, partly because of side effects and a slight risk of relapse, and the search for improved anti-viral therapy continues. However, in a proportion of patients gratifying responses to interferon may be seen.

Yours sincerely,
GEOFFREY DUSHEIKO,
Royal Free Hospital School
of Medicine,
Rowland Hill Street, NW3,
December 9.

takes of the past and prevent pollution in the future by ensuring that those who pollute the environment pay for its restoration. Such a regime, enshrined in law, would do much to concentrate the minds of industrialists on the necessity of pollution prevention.

The key to combining a healthy environment with a healthy economy is to ensure that all our environmental laws embody the "polluter pays" principle — a principle supported by the government, environmental groups and the public.

Yours sincerely,
BLAKE LEE-HARWOOD
(Senior campaigner),
Friends of the Earth,
26-28 Underwood Street,
Islington, N1,
December 9.

Student freedom

From Mr Tony Hockley

Sir, The National Union of Students recently produced a charter promoting the individual rights of those in further and higher education. This leads one to wonder whether the union will now accept that the nation's students should also be allowed to choose their national representatives, if any.

The national union is a predominantly political organisation, yet individual students have no direct means of withdrawing their individual affiliation to its political activities, whilst maintaining its commercial and leisure services, nor of reducing the millions of pounds taken from the education system each year to finance it.

To bear credibility any students' charter, based upon the rights of the individual, must deal with this issue.

Yours etc.,
T. C. HOCKLEY
(President, Leicester Polytechnic
Students' Union, 1988-9),
44 Marsham Court,
Marsham Street, SW1,
December 8.

Stark contrast

From Mr Donald A. Murray

Sir, The first few pages of today's Times made depressing reading, an all too familiar occurrence these days. However, the thing that affected me most strongly was the contrast between the image of the starving Somali child on the front and that of the 18-carat gold Santa Claus from Bond Street on the back.

Yours sincerely,
DONAL MURRAY,
70 Woodpark Avenue,
Ballymore, Dublin 16,
December 16.

To fit the crime?

From Mr B. A. Harrison

Sir, The report by Richard Ford (December 14), that the home secretary is considering appointing the managing director of London Underground to head the Prison Service, must surely, if correct, be one of the most remarkable news items of the year.

I should think the likeliest explanation of such a decision must be that Mr Clarke and his ministerial colleagues at the Home Office do not use the London Underground system. An alternative possibility could be that, having concluded that life for prisoners is at present much too comfortable, he has decided the services of an expert are required to make it more miserable.

Yours faithfully,
BERNARD HARRISON,
2 Ashridge Gardens,
Pinner, Middlesex,
December 14.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 071-782 5046.

KENNETH BOURNE

THE REV ALAN ECCLESTONE

For Ecstone's love of God was a matter for all of man's senses and not just for the intellectual side of his being. He distrusted theology and wanted God, as well as prayer, brought onto the streets. *The Night Sky of the Lord* (1980) and *Scaffolding of the Spirit* (1987) were of a piece with his passionately held beliefs. Both were admired for the deep wisdom with which they explored the imperatives of spiritual life in the modern world.

Ecstone's wife died in 1984; a son, Giles, a parish priest, died in 1990; another son, Jake, is deputy general secretary of the National Union of Journalists.

NIGEL BURGESS

Burgess is survived by his widow, Verity, and a son and daughter.

PERSONAL COLUMN

FAX: 071 481 9313

[illegible]

Call for British Gas to be split

British Gas, which gave the government one of its most successful privatisations, should be broken up into two companies, according to the government's own regulator.

Sir James McKinnon, who has repeatedly clashed with the company's management, says in a report to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission that the split is essential to ensure competition is effective. A furious reaction is expected today from British Gas. Page 1

IRA bombs blast London shoppers

The IRA again struck in London's West End, planting two bombs among thousands of Christmas shoppers in Oxford Street. Police said the IRA were playing "an obscene game" by telephoning warnings that were deliberately inaccurate and designed to maximise casualties. Pages 1, 3

Serbs accused

Lawrence Eagleburger, the American secretary of state, came close to naming Slobodan Milosevic, the president of Serbia, as a war criminal guilty of crimes against humanity. At an international conference on the former Yugoslavia in Geneva, he listed seven Serbs suspected of being involved in genocide, including Borislav Herak, who had confessed to killing more than 230 civilians. Pages 1, 10

BCCI extradition

The British investigation into the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International has taken a significant step forward with the French decision to extradite Syed Ziauddin Ali Akbar, the driving force behind BCCI's operation in Britain. The Times has learnt that the justice ministry in Paris made a decision to return him to Britain rather than America, where he is also wanted. Pages 1, 5

Province warning

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland secretary, gave a warning that "ethnic cleansing" would come to the province if Britain took a unilateral decision to leave. He was speaking in Northern Ireland at about the same time the IRA was detonating the bombs in London. Page 3

Ford axes jobs

Another 7,000 jobs were lost in Britain when Ford, the motor manufacturer, and Birmingham

Gummer roasts turkey sceptics

Traditional farm-fresh turkeys, hand-plucked and with gently decomposing entrails intact, have been declared safe for Christmas dinner tables by EC farm ministers. John Gummer, the agriculture minister, persuaded Community officials that "delayed evisceration" of turkeys, pheasants and other game birds need not endanger public health. Page 5



Wings of mercy: a French soldier from the Second Airborne Foreign Legion giving rations to a Somali in Baidoa. Gummer surrenders, page 11

Up in the air: US airline regulators

are set to reject a proposed \$750 million deal between British Airways and the loss-making USAir which would have created the world's third largest airline. The decision will be given to John Major in the US this weekend. Page 19

Jobs markets: Marks and Spencer

is to create 3,000 jobs at a new out-of-town retail, leisure and business park near Glasgow. They expect to create 850 retail jobs between them and estimate another 2,150 jobs will be created by other retailers on the site. Page 19

Reform rescue

Germany is to give Russia more than £600 million in additional funds in a move to help President Yeltsin and the faltering reform process. Page 8

Refugee exodus

The remnants of a 60,000-strong army of weary Tajiks, who have been driven from home by clan bloodshed, have formed an exodus across the river Oxus to the mountains of Afghanistan. Page 8

Peak performance: Michael Whitaker

brought swift reward to Everest, his new sponsors, when he and Monsanta won the Christmas Stocking Stakes on the opening day of the Olympia show jumping championships. Page 34

Boasian horror story: When Sada

Konakovic feeds the child in her womb, the memories of her five-month ordeal in a Serb military brothel return. "As soon as I deliver this child, the doctors had better take it away. I will kill it if I see it." Page 12

Food for thought: Fading memory

may be a sign of depression and diet rather than age. Page 13

Feeling for two: The midwife's role

that women in labour should not eat has been overturned at a Belfast hospital. A survey suggests that births are about 90 minutes faster with a new regime. Page 13

Too proper Charlie? Richard Attenborough's

Chaplin is long on personal details and problems, but short on what made the little tramp a comic phenomenon. Page 27

Welsh wizard: Anthony Hopkins

has directed Bob Kingdom in a one-man show that recreates an American recital by the poet Dylan Thomas. Page 28

Trinidad tale: Ian McDonald's

novel *The Hummingbird Tree*, the semi-autobiographical story of a 1940s white childhood in the West Indies, is now a BBC TV film, to be shown on Sunday. Page 29

More murder: Helen Mirren made

a memorable return as a detective in *Prime Suspect 2*. Page 29

Death of socialist: Patrick Cosgrave's

new book is an obituary for socialism in Britain, but Colin Welch sees that there is no shortage of heirs, among them Anthony Sampson. Page 28

Virginia blues: The most famous of

the Bloomsbury marriages comes under scrutiny, as Caroline Moorhead defends Leonard and Virginia Woolf against carping critics. Page 29

Christmas books: Fathers

Christmas, male and female, receive tips from *Times* critics on which books to purchase for those armchair generals, ace photographers, countryside connoisseurs, and antiques collectors. Pages 28, 29



Rachel Lambert, seven, one of this year's Children of Courage award winners, who braved a rattlesnake's attack to aid her brother. Pages 1, 3



Lorraine Osman, the UK's longest-serving unconvicted prisoner, arrived in Hong Kong to face fraud charges after a seven-year extradition battle. Page 5



Marion Roe faced Labour allegations about a cover-up over NHS trusts in the Commons select committee on health, which she chairs. Page 6



Colin Montgomerie is among the golfers teeing off for the world championship on the redesigned course in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Page 32

Double bind: Jewish families who have settled in the occupied West Bank face hostility not only from the Arabs but from the Israeli Labour government. *Video Diaries* (BBC2, 9.30pm) shows... Page 35

Time for action

Three meetings in three days — in Stockholm, Geneva and at the Nato council in Brussels today — have finally brought it home to the Europeans that the fighting in their midst is a cancerous evil that is spreading its poison throughout the continent. Planning for war has already begun. Page 15

Sunday muddle

The Shops Bill should call for de-regulation. It should be passed with a three-line whip. It is time for the government to stand by its own rhetoric. Page 15

Stick to yesterday

The Beatles stopped when they were ahead. They could never recapture that spirit now. Let their CDs speak for them. Page 15

BERNARD LEVIN

The apprehension, trial, conviction and sentence of Nicholas Vemage is, I think, something more than the imprisonment of an exceptionally savage triple murderer and the feelings of the bereaved.

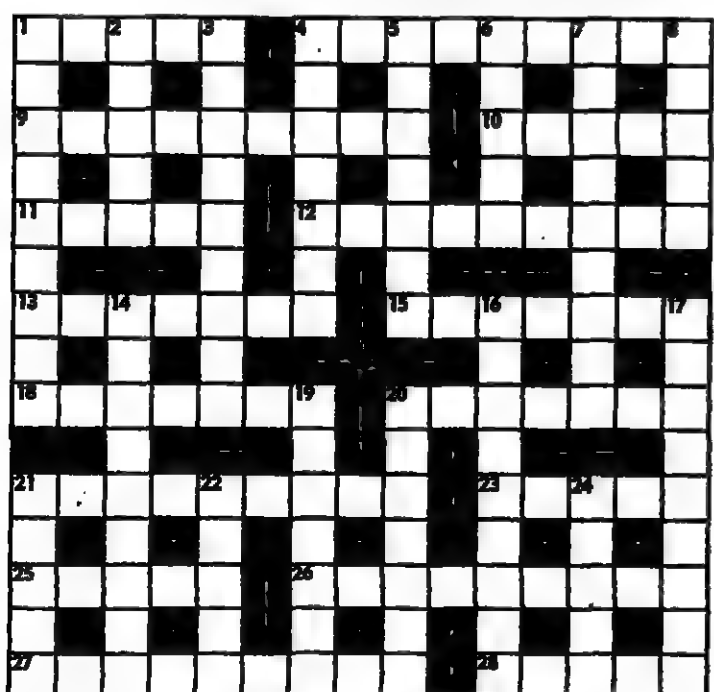
The widow of the policeman killed by Vemage, when asked whether she favoured capital punishment, understandably said yes, and it would be difficult for even the most committed abolitionist (I was one) not to have more than a moment's unease at what he did, though in this case it would be absurd to think that such a man might be deterred by the thought of the hangman. Page 14

IRWIN STELZER

Left-leaning, mildly protectionist, green and unlikely to worry too much about a short-term increase in the budget deficit or a decline in the dollar. That about sums up the economic team which President-elect Bill Clinton has assembled to help him keep his campaign promise to revitalise the American economy. Page 14

Nothing the UN has tried so far has stopped Serbians from brutalising the Bosnian Muslim population. Not an arms embargo. Not a naval blockade. Not a "no-fly" zone. Not 19 ceasefires. It is time to turn up the heat — *USA Today*

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 19,104



- ACROSS**
- A mole is black (5).
 - Succed with appeal "Don't be ridiculous" (4,3,2).
 - What is cadet up to getting involved in a revolution? (4,5).
 - "envy holds a splendid display" (5).
 - It's disastrous for beginners feeding animals to approach lions (5).
 - All together once (2,3,4).
 - Blake is injured by dagger (7).
 - Anchor under the weather in punt (7).
 - Field still, finally inert (7).
 - Understanding the popular view (7).
 - Cadge and steal washer's accessory (6,3).
 - A wife from the Hague (5).
 - Plea from a politician — "I... (5).
 - ... force politician to make an effort (9).
 - The judge round about, so... (9).
- DOWN**
- Honour the American poet for "The Iliad" (4,5).
 - Most faithful, but lacking energy and confidence (5).
 - The party's over, amidst shouting and singing (9).
 - About to confer about Welsh footway (3,4).
 - Where Derby's run (7).
 - Varying characters are to speak (5).
 - The present is compassionate (9).
 - Herb's reckoned among wealthy men (5).
 - Make cuts, some 1 once devised (9).
 - Final and desperate note, note written in pain (4,5).
 - Field marshal, more enthusiastic, hankering to oust leading Oriental (9).
 - Sebastian (or was it John?) set up business in the Smoke (7).
 - Disturbed, genuine, naive young woman (7).
 - Fit for the concours d'elegance, cars are going the wrong way (5).
 - The sound of men making an appearance (5).
 - Follow progress of river in an alternate course (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 19,103

STEPHEN COUSINS
DEGENERATE MAGE
T-S-U-R-O-I-T
CHESTNUT UNTRUE
G-T-E-I-R
SAGA RETIRING
P-N-R-A-V-E-A
FOXGLOVE CELT
L-R-S-B-U
BOLDER SLIPSHOD
C-R-D-I-L-A-P
SILO WOODLANDER
S-O-N-E-C-H
HESPERUS THEBAN

For the latest region by region forecast, 24

hours a day, dial 0800 500 followed by the appropriate code.

Greater London	701
East of London	702
Devon & Cornwall	703
Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset	704
North Devon, Devon	705
North Devon, Devon	706
North Devon, Devon	707
North Devon, Devon	708
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North Devon, Devon	716
North Devon, Devon	717
North Devon, Devon	718
North Devon, Devon	719
North Devon, Devon	720

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks

information, 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the appropriate code.

London & SE traffic, roadworks	781
M-ways/roads M4-M1	782
M-ways/roads M1-Dartford T	783
M-ways/roads Dartford T-M25	784
M-ways/roads M25-M4	785
M25 London Orbital only	786

National traffic and roadworks

National motorways	737
West Country	738
Wales	739
Midlands	740
East Anglia	741
North-west England	742
North-east England	743
Scotland	744
Northern Ireland	745

AA Roadwatch is charged at 36p per

minute (cheap rate) and 48p per minute at all other times.

Scotland and Northern Ireland will be wet and windy today with heavy rain at times. Much of central and eastern England will have a clear, frosty start, but Wales and western England will be cloudy, with rain edging across from the west during the day. Central and eastern England will stay mostly dry, but become cloudier. It will be windy in many areas, with severe gales in the North and the West. Outlook: unsettled, with rain.

MIDWAY: 1=thunder; 2=drizzle; 3=light rain; 4=heavy rain; 5=cloud; 6=clear; 7=partly cloudy; 8=partly cloudy; 9=partly cloudy; 10=partly cloudy; 11=partly cloudy; 12=partly cloudy; 13=partly cloudy; 14=partly cloudy; 15=partly cloudy; 16=partly cloudy; 17=partly cloudy; 18=partly cloudy; 19=partly cloudy; 20=partly cloudy; 21=partly cloudy; 22=partly cloudy; 23=partly cloudy; 24=partly cloudy; 25=partly cloudy; 26=partly cloudy; 27=partly cloudy; 28=partly cloudy; 29=partly cloudy; 30=partly cloudy; 31=partly cloudy; 32=partly cloudy; 33=partly cloudy; 34=partly cloudy; 35=partly cloudy; 36=partly cloudy; 37=partly cloudy; 38=partly cloudy; 39=partly cloudy; 40=partly cloudy; 41=partly cloudy; 42=partly cloudy; 43=partly cloudy; 44=partly cloudy; 45=partly cloudy; 46=partly cloudy; 47=partly cloudy; 48=partly cloudy; 49=partly cloudy; 50=partly cloudy; 51=partly cloudy; 52=partly cloudy; 53=partly cloudy; 54=partly cloudy; 55=partly cloudy; 56=partly cloudy; 57=partly cloudy; 58=partly cloudy; 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Property provision hits Daily Mail Trust

By Neil Bennett

A DISASTROUS property development has hit profits at the Daily Mail and General Trust, the media group controlled by Lord Rothermere and his family, despite a strong performance at the group's newspapers.

Pre-tax profits at the Mail in the year to end-September, slipped 8 per cent to £43.8 million, below City forecasts, after the group was forced to make a £26.5 million write-off against the value of its investment properties. These are the first full-year figures from the group since Sir David English, the former editor of the Daily Mail, replaced Lord Rothermere as chairman.

Most of the provision was against Carmelite, the office development near Fleet Street, which the group built on its former head office. The development is still 40 per cent under way, which prompted the company's chartered surveyors to give it a low valuation.

The Mail is deciding whether to redevelop or sell its former offices in Manchester, while its office in Hull are for sale.

Despite the fall in profits, the final dividend is increased 9 per cent to 98p, to make 130p for the year (119p).

The Mail compensated for the property provision with an exceptional profit of £8 million on the disposal of 1.3 million Reuters shares and a £10.4 million gain on the sale of a wharf in Purfleet, East London.

The group also made an extraordinary profit of £8.2 million on the sale and closure of a series of businesses.

Easier path for Owners Abroad

GIVEN the perception in some areas that Owners Abroad was being increasingly outflown by its rival Airtours in the battle for the skies above Europe, the deal with Thomas Cook and LTU will go a long way to restore the company's credibility.

But it does leave hanging in mid-air the question of a bid approach reported in October by Howard Klein, Owners chairman. The reported approach was greeted with some surprise by the market and generally thought to have come from Airtours.

News of the approach triggered an abrupt recovery in a share price that had collapsed 60 per cent over the summer, but takeover rules now forbid the company giving any further guidance.

The German link, as well as making excellent economic sense and offering substantial cost savings and synergies, has a defensive quality that goes some way to explain why the first movement by Owners Abroad's share price yesterday was downwards.

The turbulence that the company has been weathering, at least part of it self-inflicted, was also on display yesterday. Owners admits it at first called last season wrong, pushing up margins and capacity after the International Leisure Group collapse while the rest of the industry was cutting prices.

Operating profits to end-October were down £7.9 million at £27 million, even ahead of £4.9 million of restructuring costs, although a pre-tax figure down from £31.6 million to £25.5 million reflects lower interest costs. Owners should make £32 million in the current year



Linking up: Christopher Rodrigues, left, of Thomas Cook, and Howard Klein

without any of the full benefits from the German deal, putting the shares off 1p at 87p, on about 8 times' earnings and yielding about 5.7 per cent. Despite the fragility of the markets the company serves, investors should not be rushing towards the emergency exits just yet.

Hillsdown

FOR all his charm, Sir Harry Solomon had few friends in the City, and even fewer after Hillsdown's opportunistic rights issue last year. The 15 per cent bounce in the share price in the past two days suggests the market had

hoped for some sort of approach to accompany his departure.

The appointment of David Newton as chief executive shows that a new chapter is beginning at Hillsdown. The days of lightning acquisition sprees and incomplete consolidation are long gone. Mr Newton has a reputation as a hard-nosed numbers man. His priority will be to accelerate the disposal programme.

Most of the non-food businesses are ideal candidates for disposal including Christie-Tyler, the upholstered furniture manufacturer, and householding and property. Hillsdown may also try to sell

its commodity food businesses, such as poultry and meat. That would allow it to concentrate on higher margin businesses, such as ready meals and beverages.

A series of successful disposals would knock a big hole in the group's debts of £300 million and even turn it into a net cash holder within three years. The process started earlier this month with the £17 million sale of Sleepzee.

The group has repeated its commitment to hold the final dividend at 6.6p. This makes the shares an attractive income play, with a yield of 9.1 per cent. Admittedly, the dividend cover is likely to fall to

less than 1.5 this year and shareholders will need to be patient to see any sharp rise in the dividend or profits. But the Solomon-free Hillsdown is well worth following.

HP Bulmer

CIDER is not everyone's idea as an antidote to recession, but the British market has grown from 66 million gallons in 1989 to 81 million this year.

The growth has undoubtedly been fuelled by marketing spending at HP Bulmer and Taunton. Both seem gentlemanly on the surface but would seem to be engaged in something of a cider war to judge from an aggressive presentation by Bulmer.

From the Hereford camp, Bulmer says it is spending up to £14 million on marketing British cider in the financial year to end-April. It has a market share of 45 per cent, measured by the National Association of Cider Makers, against 36.3 per cent for the newly floated off Taunton, in the Somerset camp. Time was when Bulmer had 50 per cent but it has fought back from 35 per cent in 1988.

All this left Bulmer shares at an all-time high, up 9p to 400p yesterday, after reporting pre-tax profits up 18 per cent to £10.7 million, earnings up 20 per cent to 12.99p and a dividend up 8.7 per cent to 3.75p. For the full year, the City expects earnings of £19 million, giving earnings of 23p and putting the shares on a multiple of more than 17. A dividend of 9.9p offers a yield of 3.3 per cent. Hold but beware. Cider watchers can see the boom slowing in both volume and margin terms.

Baggeridge Brick sees no sign of recovery

BAGGERIDGE Brick said there was no tangible evidence of recovery from the harsh trading environment of the past four years. Demand for bricks continued to decline and there has been a significant reduction in selling prices because of overcapacity and high stock levels.

The company is holding the final dividend at 0.75p a share, making an unchanged total of 2.375p for the year. In the year to the end of September, pre-tax profits fell from £2.54 million to £1.8 million and earnings from 4.84p a share to 3.03p. Peter Ward, the chairman, said interest rates may need to be reduced further to secure recovery. Extremely wet autumn weather had compounded difficulties and many construction sites are closing for extended periods over Christmas.

TVS investors hold out

INTERNATIONAL Family Entertainment, the American bidder for TVS Entertainment, the ITV contractor set to lose its franchise at the end of the month, received acceptance from 69.1 per cent of the ordinary shares and 12.7 per cent of the preference shares, representing 59.3 of the votes in total and effective control, by the first closing date for offers. But a block of preference shareholders, estimated as close to 50 per cent by the rebels, are holding out for better terms from International Family Entertainment.

New chief at Amber Day

AMBER Day Holdings, the retail group that owns the What Everyone Wants clothing chain, has found a new chairman after the departure of Philip Green in September. He is Stacey Ellis, formerly director of planning and development at Incharge. Amber Day still seeks a chief executive, the second post vacated by Mr Green, and two non-executive directors. David Thompson, acting chairman and chief executive, told the annual meeting that pre-Christmas trading at What Everyone Wants had shown like-for-like gains.

Chemring lifts payout

CHEMRING Group, the industrial holding company, said order books were healthy and a further increase in turnover and profit was expected in the current year. The company, with interests in defence, marine, environmental and engineering markets, is paying a final dividend of 2.17p, making a total of 32.62p (29.65p) for the year to end-September. Pre-tax profits rose from £4.72 million to £5.2 million. Earnings were unchanged at 68.6p a share after a higher tax charge.

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TRUST	MANAGER	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	999	998	997	996	995	9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French banks raise interest rates as franc nears floor

By ANATOLE KALETSKY
and COLIN NARRBROUGH

LEADING French banks unexpectedly raised their interest rates by half a point to 10 per cent yesterday, as the franc sank towards its floor in the European exchange-rate mechanism and rumours abounded in financial markets about a major policy announcement to be made by Pierre Bérégovoy, the prime minister, at a press conference this morning.

There was speculation that M Bérégovoy might announce a decision to tie the franc more closely to the mark or to make the Bank of France politically independent. But French officials said the prime minister's press conference had been scheduled several days ago and would deal mainly with the parliamentary elections next year.

Although French money market rates have been lifted several times in the past few months to defend the franc, bank customers had been shielded from the effects of higher interest rates. But the higher base rates announced yesterday will be passed on directly to customers, forcing businessmen and voters to pay for the franc's defence.

The interest rate move was led by Société Générale, but it was only when the state-owned Banque Nationale de Paris announced an increase in its rates that analysts decided the move was part of an officially sanctioned operation to defend the franc.

Alison Cottrell, of Midland Montagu, suggested France might have decided to lift rates because the franc had fallen below the 75 per cent diver-

gence limit in the ERM grid. Under ERM rules there is "a presumption" that countries that move outside the 75 per cent limit will take policy actions to defend their currencies.

After Black Wednesday, Bundesbank officials criticised Britain for failing to raise its interest rates when the pound moved through the 75 per cent limit. France's move might have been intended to show that it takes the ERM rules more seriously and thus to ensure continuing Bundesbank support.

Currency dealers reported no let-up in the downward pressure on the franc, despite the surprise move in interest rates. The lack of any reaction in the currency to the move by the French banks was seen by some analysts as a disturbing sign.

In another ominous sign for France, leading international banks and investment managers noted little sign of purely speculative selling of the franc. Dealers said most of the selling came from French individuals and companies, as well as from long-term investment funds eager to hedge against the possibility of a devaluation in the new year.

The franc closed in London at Fr3.4195 against the mark, only about a centime above its ERM floor of Fr3.4305.

The mark remains a magnet for investment and speculative funds despite the severe weakening in the German

economy that is now apparent.

Two of Germany's leading manufacturers delivered warnings about the economic outlook, particularly in the car sector.

Edvard Reuter, the Daimler management board chairman, said there would be a significant fall in his group's net profits this year from DM1.94 billion last year. The German economy, he said, had "burst like a soap bubble".

Dieter Ullsperger, finance director at VW, which plans short-time working of between 12 and 19 days next quarter at its seven plants in Germany, plus one in Belgium, also painted an alarming picture. "We are entering a crisis," he said, adding, however, that VW was well armed for it.

VW, Europe's leading car-maker, expects the German car market to fall 20 per cent next year. It expects a "significant loss" this quarter, a period burdened by foreign exchange losses and retirement costs.

Sterling showed little reaction to yesterday's weak retail sales figures, closing at about DM2.4575, roughly where it closed on Tuesday.

The dollar failed to make headway against the mark despite more evidence of sustained recovery. US housing starts rose 1.5 per cent in November, confirming an upward trend. Nevertheless, the dollar lost about half a penny to trade at DM1.5550.



Toasting the future: John Rudgard, left, and Esmond Bulmer toast the cider company's results yesterday

Bulmer targets Europe

By GEORGE SIVELL

HP BULMER, the cider group, is starting to market the recently acquired Belgian Stassen cider, in both Belgium and France. It is the start of efforts by the Hereford company to expand into mainland Europe, especially Spain, the low countries, France and Belgium, John Rudgard, the chief executive, said.

In the half year to October 23, Bulmer raised pre-tax profits 18 per cent to £10.7 million, earnings by 20 per cent to 12.99p, out of which an 8.7 per cent improvement in the half-year dividend to 3.75p will be paid. Profits from the pectin subsidiary halved to £584,000, although there are no plans at present for disposal.

Esmond Bulmer, the chairman, and the board, said: "In a generally depressed economy, cider sales have continued to show great resilience and strong support for our brands has once more enabled us to increase our market share. The threat to cider from duty harmonisation as first proposed by the European Commission has now gone and we look forward to building our business on the European mainland."

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Nott takes over at Hillsdown

By NEIL BENNETT

SIR Harry Solomon is stepping down as chairman and chief executive of Hillsdown Holdings, the food group he founded 17 years ago. He is being replaced as chairman in April by Sir John Nott, the former defence secretary and chairman of Lazard Brothers, the merchant bank.

The Stock Exchange is believed to be investigating the 10p leap in Hillsdown's share price on Tuesday before Sir John's appointment was announced, which was coupled with heavy option buying. A spokeswoman said the exchange would investigate unusual share price movements.

The shares rose another 7p

to 129p once the official announcement was released yesterday morning as City institutions interpreted the management changes as a sign that Hillsdown is reversing its acquisitive strategy and will begin a series of disposals and rationalisation to reduce its £300 million debts.

In addition to Sir John's appointment, David Newton, the group's chief operating officer, is becoming chief executive on January 1.

Sir Harry said he had been planning the move for some time and denied that he had been put under any pressure by shareholders to split the roles of chairman and chief

executive. "I have lived, slept and breathed Hillsdown for 17 years and the time has come to separate the jobs. It is important to do these things when people still want you to stay," he said.

He will remain on board as a non-executive director. "I will try and help but I won't interfere," he said.

Hillsdown also said that current trading is in line with earlier expectations, but that volumes and margins have been hit by the recession. The group repeated its pledge to hold its final dividend at 8.6p, to make 8.8p for the year.

Tempus, page 20

Amstrad directors sell shares

Two directors of Amstrad, both of whom were re-elected to the board at the annual meeting on November 24, have sold their share stakes in the computer company.

The transactions were executed on Tuesday at 23 1/2p a share, less than a week after Alan Sugar's plan to take Amstrad private with a 30p a share cash offer was rejected by shareholders.

Malcolm Miller, group sales and marketing director, sold 714,000 shares, and Robert Watkins, technical director, sold his total holding of 563,500 shares. Neither has a service contract with the company that exceeds 12 months. At September 3, both directors held 950,000 options.

Amstrad gave no reason for the sales. Of the seven-man Amstrad board, three directors now hold no shares in the company. Mr Sugar, chairman and founder of the computer group, holds 205.6 million out of an issued capital of 581.2 million shares. Amstrad shares yesterday traded at 24p, down 1p.

Payout passed

McCarthy & Stone, the sheltered housing group, is passing its 1992 final dividend and says dividends are unlikely to be declared for two years. The group, which traded at 603 1/2p in 1987 but which yesterday sank 6p to 22p, reports a £19 million pre-tax loss (£16.9 million loss for the year ended August 31). The interim dividend was 0.5p, making a 0.5p total (1p).

Audit denial

KPMG Peat Marwick, the accountant, said it did not audit or evaluate the Spanish investments of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), which controls some of the Emirate's offshore wealth. The statement followed media reports that examined its business review presented to KIA in December 1991.

Gold strike

Tele-Communications, a US cable TV group, has taken a 27 per cent stake in UK Gold, the satellite channel. BBC Enterprises, Thames TV and Cox Enterprises, of the US, share the rest of the venture.

Northern Electric to cut bills after profits soar 52%

By PATRICIA TREHAN

NORTHERN Electric is to cut the cost of the average domestic bill by £10 a year after a 52 per cent leap in pre-tax profits to £39.5 million in the six months to end-September. Shareholders in the Newcastle-based regional electricity supply company will share in its good fortune with a 13.5 per cent increase in their interim dividend payment to 6.5p.

Seaboard, the electricity company serving the south-east of England, also unveiled strong results for the six months to end-September, with profits climbing 53 per cent to £9.2 million and a dividend increase of 14 per cent to 5.7p. Sir Keith Stuart, Seaboard chairman, said its prices are already the lowest in England and Wales. Seaboard

has just paid its domestic and small business customers a rebate, which cancels out increases made in April, and Sir Keith said he hopes there will be a reduction in tariffs next year.

The heads of both companies said they are unlikely to sign new five-year deals for coal-fired power with the generators until the government completes its energy review in the new year.

David Morris, Northern's chairman, said the company will cut electricity tariffs by an average of 2.7 per cent from January 1, with prices for households falling 3 per cent. He expects Northern will be able to maintain the price reduction beyond April 1, when new tariffs are likely to be introduced. The new tariffs

depend on the regional supply companies reaching agreement with the generators for coal-fired power from April.

Mr Morris said part of the reason for the profits increase was the unusually high electricity purchase costs from the generators in the first half of the previous year. He says the increase does not imply a full-year profits increase of the same level.

Electricity sales to domestic and commercial customers increased 1.5 per cent and 2.2 per cent respectively, but units distributed to the industrial market fell 2.6 per cent.

Warmer weather knocked Seaboard's electricity sales to domestic customers, down 1 per cent. Commercial sales grew 0.4 per cent and sales to industry fell 6.5 per cent.

Tempus, page 20

Judge's ruling delights Price Waterhouse

By NEIL BENNETT, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

AN EPIC \$338 million legal battle between Standard Chartered, the banking group, and Price Waterhouse, the accountant, took a new twist yesterday when an Arizona judge overturned an earlier jury verdict in Standard's favour after declaring it was "blatantly erroneous".

The bank must now begin the entire action again with a new trial in the spring that could last more than a year. Last night, both sides said they would continue to fight the

claim, which relates to PW's role in Standard's ill-fated acquisition of the United Bank of Arizona in 1987.

The dispute between the two sides has become increasingly hostile. Standard claims that Price Waterhouse was the reporting accountant in the acquisition of United Bancorp and that it failed to reveal the full extent of the bank's bad debts. PW insists it was merely United Bancorp's auditors and that the relevant audits were not available at the time

the deal was struck. At the Superior Court of Arizona in Phoenix yesterday, Judge John Sicht granted PW's motion for a new trial on the grounds that the verdict from the earlier trial, which finished in May, was "irreconcilably inconsistent", even though he was the judge who had presided over the original trial.

PW is jubilant at the decision and the chance of another opportunity to argue the case in court. Shaun O'Malley, a senior partner, said: "Now

relieved of the burden and unfair verdict, we move forward more determined than ever and confident that justice will prevail."

A Standard spokesman said: "We are disappointed that there is to be a retrial on what appears to be a technicality."

Separately, Standard announced a \$64 million sale and leaseback of 13 of its branches in Hong Kong to strengthen the group's balance sheet.

MTM in talks with banks over reshape

By GEORGE SIVELL

MTM, the chemicals group, is in talks with its banks over a restructuring and is calling a special meeting of shareholders for December 31. It has rolled over a standstill agreement with its banks, which was due to expire on January 4, until the end of March.

Yesterday's circular to shareholders is the latest in a series of blows. Richard Lines, former chairman and founder, resigned in March after two profits warnings in a week. In May, MTM reported a 1991 pre-tax loss of £20 million.

The shares plunged 16p yesterday to 15p, an all-time low. Shareholders' funds, stated at £15 million in the half-year results published on September 9, have apparently all but been wiped out by interest payments, losses on anticipated disposals and the fall of the pound against the dollar. Debts, stated at £100 million at the half year, are understood to have risen to £120 million.

A fall in shareholders' funds, to less than half of the called-up share capital, requires a company to call a shareholders' meeting under section 142 of the Companies Act. MTM said it was also in breach of a borrowing limit set in its articles of association. These require shareholder approval to operate with borrowings of more than five times capital and reserves.

MTM said it had realised £5 million from disposals so far but that negotiations over self-offs, which could bring in a further £15 million, "have been protracted and may have to be aborted if



Lines former chairman

satisfactory terms cannot be achieved". The board said: "While progress has been made in rationalising the business and improving operational efficiency... the benefits of these actions will not arise until 1993 and beyond. The company's performance during the final quarter of 1992 has been adversely affected by a number of factors, including the continuing requirement for management to spend significant time developing refinancing proposals and the deterioration in the performance of the chemicals' market worldwide."

MTM has also put up for sale its headquarters on the North Yorkshire, Cleveland border. It is understood to be part of several disposals expected to bring in £2.5 million. According to Directors in Edinburgh, eight MTM directors bought shares at 29p on September 14, including Ken Schofield, chief executive, who bought 331,000.

Company	Value	Facilities	Acquisition Date
BURTONWOOD BREWERY PLC	£20,000,000	Brewing, Cider Facility	March 1992
MANFIELD BREWERY PLC	£36,000,000	Food, Home Facilities	April 1992
TAINTON CIDER PLC	£12,000,000	Food, Home Facilities	July 1992
MARR TAVERNS LIMITED	£16,600,000	Loan Facilities	August 1992
SYGAMORE TAVERNS LIMITED	£19,300,000	Acquisition Loan	September 1992

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EE/63

Defence cutbacks hit Alvis

Pre-tax profits at Alvis, the armoured cars to gunships group, slumped to £1.13 million in the year to September 30, as the company struggled to cope with a cutback in spare parts buying by the Ministry of Defence.

Despite a healthy performance from the optical targeting subsidiaries, a stock writedown and the cost of restructuring and redundancies pushed the company into an overall loss of £3.61 million, or 5.5p a share.

The company, previously known as United Scientific, announced in October that it was cutting 230 of the 750-strong workforce at its 150 armoured vehicles factory in Coventry in an effort to restore profitability of that operation.

Last year, it barely broke even. The company had an order book at end-September of £97 million. The board is recommending a final dividend of 0.5p (1.7p).

Water rises

Bristol Water Holdings has increased its interim dividend from 9.5p a share to 10.5p after a rise in profits from £2.6 million before tax to £3.4 million in the six months to the end of September. Earnings were 44p a share (33.5p).

Chemicals link

Harrisons & Crosfield is to discuss a joint venture in pvc additives and related businesses between its chemicals division and Akzo, the Dutch chemicals company.

Bexbuild slides

Bexbuild Developments is holding its interim dividend at 1p a share after a decline in pre-tax profits from £138,000 to £66,000 in the six months to the end of September. Earnings were 1.2p a share (2.1p).

Optimism in futures puts new life into shares

THE equity market took its lead from an optimistic futures market with prices putting in a late advance to close near their best of the day.

The FT-SE 100 index of leading shares closed 14.9 up, at 2,732.8, with turnover boosted by year-end squaring-up of books and bed and breakfast orders designed to establish a trading loss. By the close, a total of 676 million shares had changed hands.

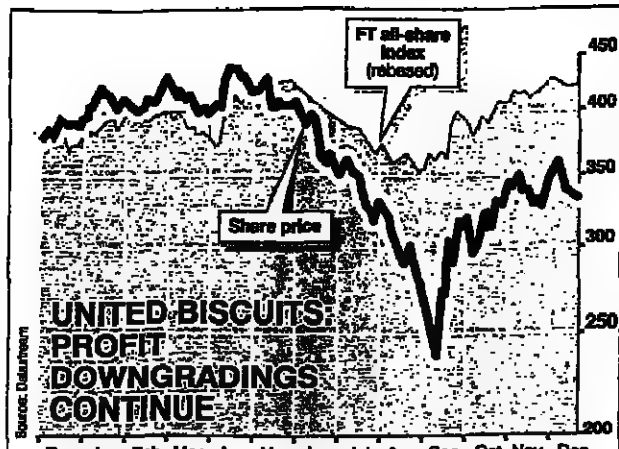
But it seems clear that institutions are unimpressed with the steady stream of economic data, which has failed to show even the faintest glimmer of economic recovery. As a result, they are proving reluctant to open new positions.

Sentiment in the stores sector was damaged by news of the latest retail price index showing a fall of 0.1 per cent in November, underlying suggestions earlier this week from the CBI that the pick-up in consumer spending had proved short-lived.

Fortunately, the damage was limited, although falls were recorded in Burton Group, 1.5p to 65p, Esam 6p to 21.9p, and Sears 1p to 96p. Argos also dropped 7p to 27.7p on talk of a profits downgrade by one leading broker.

Amber Day, the troubled retailer, firmed 4p to 34p on an announcement that Stacey Ellis had been appointed as non-executive chairman in the wake of the departure of Philip Green.

Among leaders, Guinness fell 9p to 480p, upset by full-year figures from Moët Hennessey Louis Vuitton, the French drinks and luxury



UNITED BISCUITS: PROFIT DOWNGRADING CONTINUES

goods group. LVMH has followed the lead of Guinness by warning brokers that 1993 looks like being a difficult year. Both companies have a 24 per cent cross-holdings in each other.

GEC climbed 7p to 269p after a private dinner with Credit Lyonnais Laing, the stockbroker. The group seems to have made a favourable

impression and re-assured Laing about current prospects. Rolls-Royce attracted some much needed support, adding 5.5p to 109p. The group has just been awarded a contract by International Lease Finance to supply engines for 12 Boeing 757s in a deal worth £100 million.

British Aerospace also jumped 7p to 147p, cheered by the news of Airbus Industrie's latest contract. This has helped to compensate for the loss of a major order with Northwest Airlines announced last week. Amstrad, the consumer electronics group, slipped 1.5p to 24.5p. Malcolm Miller and Robert Watkins, both directors, have sold their entire holdings in the company after sharehold-

ers rejected the terms of 30p a share from Alan Sugar, the chairman. Mr Miller has sold 714,000 shares at 23.5p and Mr Watkins 563,500 shares at 23.5p. Owners Abroad, the package tour operator, eased 1p to 87p after a long-awaited takeover bid failed to materialise. Instead, LTV, the German holiday group, which owns Thomas Cook, is buying

Brighter outlook in developing countries

By COLIN NARBROUGH
WORLD TRADE
CORRESPONDENT

WHILE economic slowdown, or recession, has afflicted many leading industrialised economies, the financial situation for much of the developing world is looking brighter than for some time, according to the World Bank.

In its annual review of world debt, the bank says the net flow of financial resources to the middle-income developing countries has risen by an aggregate 130 per cent over the past three years to a projected \$89 billion this year.

Private funds are playing a much bigger role as there has been a shift from debt to equity financing and from bank financing to non-bank sources. High creditworthiness continues to allow the East Asian and Pacific economies, which are attracting increased foreign direct investment, excellent access to the capital markets.

The low income developing countries, which encompass much of sub-Saharan Africa and the South Asian economies, by contrast remain heavily reliant on official sources of finance for development projects and economic adjustment programmes. The aggregate net flow to these countries is expected to be broadly unchanged this year.

For the developing world as a whole, the net flow of resources - debt, equity and grants - rose 17 per cent this year to \$134 billion, with foreign direct investment and portfolio investment showing the steepest gains. At the end of this year, the developing countries' total external debt is expected to stand at \$1,700 billion, up almost \$100 billion from last year.

MICHAEL CLARK

Wave of selling hits IBM in New York

New York - Blue chips were slightly higher at late morning. The Dow Jones industrial average, which started firm, had all gains briefly wiped away after a wave of selling hit IBM. The company was off \$2½ at \$53½. Alex Brown cut its rating on the company, citing too many uncertainties.

A floor trader said: "IBM brought on the selling." The Dow was up 2.97 points to 3,287.33 after reaching a high of 3,295.71. In the broad market, advancing shares were ahead of declining issues seven to six.

Shares ended lower on profit-taking, giving up morning gains. The Nikkei average was down 212.03 points to 17,268.71.

Shares prices continued to strengthen in the afternoon with the Hang Seng index ending 100.15 points higher, at 5,415.96.

Singapore - Shares ended higher, led by blue chips in brisk trading. The Straits Times industrial index rose 14.52 points, or 1.09 per cent, to finish at 1,456.62.

Sydney - The All Ordinaries index hovered around the 1,500 mark until it slumped in the afternoon, finishing 12.6 points lower at 1,497.0.

Frankfurt - Dreyer corporate news from Volkswagen and Daimler-Benz sent German share prices sliding lower, but traders expect the market to level out ahead of the expiry of options tomorrow. The Dax index closed 9.17 points lower at 1,472.07.

(Reuters)

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GOVERNMENT securities

made a hesitant start with the latest economic information offering few signs of the recovery that has long been promised after the devaluation of the pound.

Prices showed little change on overnight levels in early trading with few investors willing to commit themselves. Prices later drifted off with the retail sales and PSBR figures offering little cheer.

But selling pressure remained light and prices later recovered, helped by the appearance of a few cheap buyers.

On the futures market, the Long Gilt was squeezed higher in thin trading, finishing ¼ better at 99½ with only 8,500 contracts completed. On the cash market, Treasury 94 per cent 2012 improved ¼ to £101½ while at the shorter end, Exchequer was four ticks better at £109½.

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100 90% SHORTS (under 5 years)

10

Tell Sid that he is being conned

The simmering row between British Gas and its regulator Sir James McKinnon has finally flared into the public domain. What British Gas feared all along, a regulatory battle to preserve the integrity of the company, has now begun. The issues are essentially simple but have enormous implications for other privatised utilities such as British Telecom, the two power generators and the regional electricity distributors. Sir James wishes to separate the rest of British Gas from its pipeline distribution operations in the interests of promoting competition. No half measures will do says Sir James. Administrative separation of the pipeline leaves too many conflicts of interest. British Gas must be broken up into two independent companies. In response, British Gas will doubtless say that the proposal is costly, difficult, time-consuming and desperately unfair.

Both adversaries will doubtless argue their cases cogently and with feeling. But someone should be speaking up for Sid, who was, in his thousands, persuaded to invest when British Gas was privatised. Sid bought on the prospect of owning a stake in a safe, stable, cash generative utility. He is now in danger of becoming the meat in the sandwich when the company and its regulator do battle.

Sir James freely admits in his submission to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission that the break-up of British Gas conflicts with the 1986 offer for sale prospectus which said that the structure of the company would remain unchanged. But astonishingly Sir James also says that it is now the Ofgas view that the prospectus no longer has any legal or moral standing. It ceased to have such standing several years ago he adds. That will seem ironic to long term institutional British Gas investors. They are used to being accused of short termism but will not have expected a regulator to dismiss prospectus undertakings as redundant after only a year or two.

If Ofgas wins the day and the MMC accepts that prospectus pledges can be torn up so readily, it will be a black day for share ownership and may well set a dangerous precedent for the rest of the privatised utilities. The point at issue is a subtle one. It may well be that a separated pipeline company would eventually produce higher returns to shareholders. But the prospectus did not have to contain an undertaking about the future integrity of the company, and since it did, shareholders are entitled to feel aggrieved that he goal posts are being shifted. If it should prove necessary, a boycott of BT3, the springtime sale of the Government's third tranche of BT shares, would make the point forcefully.

No entry for BA

British Airways' hopes of forging a world-beating global airline through alliance with the troubled USAir are evaporating rapidly. Official Washington sources appear keen that John Major is aware of the outgoing Bush Administration's intention to reject the proposed link so that he can skirt round the issue when he flies to the American capital at the weekend. Rejection is bad news for USAir which like most of the largest US carriers is haemorrhaging cash at a rapid rate.

It also reeks of hypocrisy as an example of naked protectionism at a time when the US presents itself in Gatt talks and elsewhere as the champion of free trade. US negotiators demanded unconditional "open skies" rights to Britain without the slightest guarantee that the protectionist legislation banning overseas control of American airlines would be amended. In truth, the powerful US airline lobby fears a financially and operationally strong BA which has sailed through storms that have crippled most of its rivals.

Colin Robinson argues it is time to remove the artificial distortions that are present in Britain's electricity generation industry

Evidence submitted as part of the government's coal review shows few differences in diagnosis. Blame for British Coal's latest problems — revealed in its October proposal to shut three-fifths of its pits and shed three-fifths of its employees — is attributed mainly (and correctly) to the unsatisfactory state of the privatised electricity supply industry.

The industry is in some ways an improvement on its nationalised predecessor, since entry to generation is no longer impossible and there is some competition to supply electricity. But in general, competitive forces are not strong enough to pass on to consumers the efficiency gains that are being made.

Moreover, the market for power generation fossil fuels is dominated by National Power and PowerGen and is distorted by support for nuclear power, taxes on oil and the remains of coal contracts — the government gave little thought to the impact on the coal industry of their ending in March 1993.

Because of the peculiar nature of the electricity market, there is no reason to believe that, either now or after the initial contracts end, it will result in the "right" amounts of coal being produced at the "right" prices. Consensus about diagnosis extends also to remedies. Most people who have contributed evidence want to introduce new distortions to "correct" those previously introduced by governments. The coal review provides a field day for pressure groups. They know from past experience that British governments have always intervened extensively in energy affairs, seeking short-term political fixes. Naturally, they assume the purpose of the review is to find some politically acceptable increase in British Coal sales.

Pressure groups can easily play that game by setting out schemes which, while increasing indigenous coal production, would serve their own interests. It is straightforward enough to do. There is still plenty of coal-burning power station capacity available — more than 80 million tonnes of coal a year has been used in UK power stations in recent years.

So, by restricting imports of coal or electricity from France, by reducing output of nuclear-generated electricity or by vetoing some gas-fired plant proposals, competition for British Coal could be limited and its sales increased. Delaying the planned liberalisation of electricity supply to smaller consumers (due in 1994) would allow much of the cost to be borne by such consumers and would make life easier for the regional electricity companies.

An additional boost to deep-mined coal production could be given by

constraining output from relatively cheap opencast mines.

There is some coincidence of interest between many of the pressure groups and the DTI, which is evidently hankering after greater powers to intervene in power station building programmes and to promote the use of particular fuels. But are we to return to the short-term fixes which have characterised British energy policy for so long? Instead, why not try something new, moving to a market-based energy policy which would reduce the power of existing energy monopolies and minimise the influence of producer pressure groups? That would at least be consistent with privatisation. More important, it would strike at the root of the problems of British coal mining rather than dealing merely with the symptoms.

Such a scheme might even be a vote catcher. Even though governments (of whatever party) generally dislike giving up power to markets, they must be aware of the large number of disgruntled consumers of energy who quite rightly feel aggrieved at the way electricity prices have risen in recession and who want more choice and lower prices.

The outlines of a market-based

policy are described in an Institute of Economic Affairs paper which is about to be published.

First, the market power of companies in the electricity supply industry (especially the generators) needs to be curbed, by breakup if necessary. It is because the generators are dominant that their fuel purchasing decisions cannot be assumed to be those of companies in a competitive market. There may well be a bias against coal in their fuel choices, compounded by the desire of the regional electricity companies to side-step the generators' power by building or contracting for gas-fired plant. A dash for gas would have occurred anyway, but probably not on the scale of the past two years.

Some people evidently believe that generating costs and prices are readily ascertainable facts and that the industry regulator can easily discover, by analysing contracts, what "correct" fuel choices would have been. Neither is correct. Quoted costs and prices are forecasts many years into an uncertain future. And the regulator can examine only contracts which have been signed. Just as important are the contracts which have never been

offered because competition is so weak. They can be discovered only by letting the competitive process work.

Second, support for nuclear power should cease. The fossil fuel levy, which increases Nuclear Electric's income by about £1.3 billion a year, should go. There are no tangible benefits for consumers, yet it seriously distorts the fuel market. Furthermore, the state nuclear companies are almost certainly diverting funds in their own direction because of their relatively low required rates of return on investment.

Third, no pits should be closed before they have been offered to private-sector owners who will need assurances that they will not be shut out of markets by agreements between British Coal and the two generators. Full coal privatisation should follow, after the government makes clear to potential investors that generation will become a competitive industry. British coal mining has already suffered deep wounds from the state of uncertainty in which it has existed since the "ultimate privatisation" was announced in 1988. There is good reason to believe — not only on theoretical grounds but from recent consultants' reports — that private coal companies would cut

costs substantially, and would also be more flexible on pricing than British Coal. Provided there were competing coal companies, reductions in costs would be passed on to consumers.

If the government would adopt the principle of establishing coal and electricity markets in which there is genuine rivalry among suppliers, it would be able to see its way through the conflicting claims it now faces. Otherwise, it will end up supporting the views of the most powerful and plausible special interests and those which bring the most immediate political gains.

At present, the coal and electricity markets are so distorted that one cannot trust pit closure decisions which result from the view of a single state-owned coal company involved in negotiations with only two generators. Instead of seeking to impose more distortions, the government should go for a longer-term solution — more competitive markets in which one could be confident that electricity generators and coal owners were, in making decisions about starting plants or closing old ones, following their lowest cost options.

The writer is Editorial Director of the Institute of Economic Affairs



Sunset industry: will Silverhill and the other pits under threat of closure by British Coal see a new dawn after the government's review?

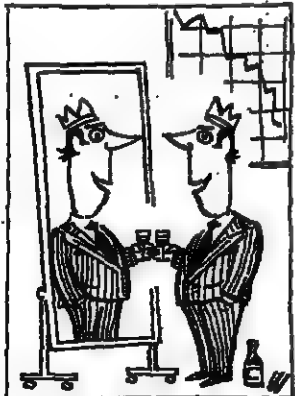
THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Padley rebuilds his career

MICHAEL Padley, one of the City's better known building and property analysts, who left Société Générale Strauss Turnbull in June, is quietly making a comeback with Haggis Binn, a financial public relations firm. Padley, 39, began his career as a tax officer with the Inland Revenue in Middlesbrough, his home town, and was on course to become the UK's youngest tax inspector when he abruptly changed course. After working for Wise Speke, the Newcastle stockbroker, he joined Capel Cure Myers in December 1986, a month before it was bought by ANZ, and went on to become the only analyst in the City to be Exet-rated in materials, contracting and property at the same time. "The property people were gentlemen, the builders were blunt," says Padley, who spent three years at Strauss after a brief and highly lucrative spell with Swiss Bank Corporation — he was made redundant with a massive pay-off after only 2½ months — and was part of a team including David Soddart, food retail analyst, and Michael Hicks.

The Cisco Kid

BRIAN Winterlood, known for years as "Mr USM", for his enthusiastic support of the smaller company sector, has a new nickname. After unveiling plans for the new City Group for Smaller Companies (Ciscos) with Andrew Beeson, of Beeson Gregory, last week,



"Pity about all the redundancies, but we've saved a packet on this year's party"

Winterlood is fast becoming known as "The Cisco Kid" — a name with a certain jaunty ring to it. "The demise of the USM has left a big hole for us to fill," says Winterlood, who flies to Quito, Ecuador, tomorrow, for a well-earned Christmas break with his family, which will include a few days in the Galapagos islands and a stay on a floating hotel up the Amazon. Back on the subject of smaller companies, cinema fans may recall that Kevin Costner's horse in *Dances with Wolves* was also called Cisco. The horse was shot by Costner's own side.

Name of the game

KEEPING the client happy is the name of the game in these hard times, but the message does not seem to have sunk in at Hambros Bank, which held one of its regular rugby clashes at the Bank of England sports

ground in Roehampton, south west London, on Sunday. Its opponent, Banque Nationale de Paris, also happens to be one of the firm's best clients. So it is a little unfortunate that Hambros thrashed the French 62-5. "It's the first time we've played them," says Paddy Morrissey, UK salesman and team captain, who counted Matthew Vickerstaff, a former Cambridge blue, and Tony Curtin, a director of the bank, among his team-mates. An unseemly scuffle saw one of the Hambros team taken off with a dislocated shoulder, but the players made up for it with copious amounts of beer and wine after the game. Hambros is making quite a name for itself in City rugby circles. The team won two out of three games this year, beating the French along with a team from Deutsche Bank, but falling foul of that great rugby-playing nation... Japan.

Sterling efforts?

THE mighty Bundesbank, and Helmut Schlesinger, its president, now known for his ill-timed remarks, have, understandably, taken heavy flak at home and abroad over the stubborn line the bank has pursued on interest rates this year. However justified these angry blasts at the German monetary authorities may be, there will certainly be one man who will be thankful for the way the Bundesbank has managed its affairs this year. Theo Waigel, the German finance minister, is, according to estimates disclosed in the usually well informed *Die Welt*, set to receive DM12 billion from the Bundesbank to

wands the federal budget this year. Admittedly, that is some what less than last year's transfer to Bonn, but the central bank profit in 1991 was, after all, a record DM15.2 billion. The smaller, but nonetheless handsome, profit of DM13 billion this year, reflects, we are told, the depreciation of the Bundesbank's foreign currency reserves — probably the sterling element.

SCRAWLED on a wall near the Square Mile: Did you hear about the dyed-in-the-devil warship who sold his soul to Satan?

Grinding waltz

DOWN on the Danube too, it would seem, 1992 has been something of an annus horribilis. Not only has the Hofburg, the grand Austrian imperial palace in Vienna, gone up in flames, but there are whispers that modern Austria's fast-waltz economy may finally be losing tempo under the desiccating impact of recession, or something close to it, blighting its main economic dancing partners. If that was not enough to put one off one's Apfelstrudel, Austrian Airlines, the national carrier, has brought the news that it will post a net loss this year for the first time in 21 years. In spite of carrying a record number of passengers and posting turnover up 17.4 per cent. After the new year ball, the Austrians will, doubtless, be hoping for better luck as they get down to negotiations with Brussels on entry to that merry band, the European Community.

JON ASHWORTH

Raising small business standards

From Mr Alan Bartlett
Sir, Your assumption that small business interests are being furthered by undue criticism of BS 5750 is entirely misplaced ("Championing small businesses", December 11) should treat their customers with Barclaycard medicine.

It is to put up straw men to refute that "securing BS 5750 deals for good with the quality question" and that it is concerned with systems and does not show "that you are necessarily the best around". Anyone familiar with BS 5750 knows that it is only part, albeit a key part, of total quality and that it is intended to deal with systems. It is an arguable proposition that "small businesses by their nature are likely to have more TQ practices actually in place". What is more evident is that businesses seeking to grow and sustain growth are often constrained by lack of proper systems.

Of course obtaining BS 5750 can be costly and diffi-

cult for small businesses, but what is the worth of a quality standard that is cheap and easy? That said there are undoubtedly consultants and others who make the process unnecessarily complicated and thus expensive.

The British Standards Institution has as a priority for this coming year how to make BS 5750 more user friendly for small businesses. A number of Chambers of Commerce are already helping small businesses to cut costs and eliminate difficulties through BS 5750 mutual help groups. I would suggest that these, and similar measures, are the right way to champion small businesses over quality standards. They help them cope, rather than add to their understandable confusion and confusions.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN BARTLETT
(Executive Director)
The Association of British Chambers of Commerce,
9 Tufton Street, SW1.

Barclaycard medicine

From Dr K. Coatsworth
Sir, Perhaps those companies suffering from delayed payments against outstanding accounts (Business Letters, December 11) should treat their customers with Barclaycard medicine.

Payment of my Barclaycard Visa balance of £551.61 for the month of November was received and credited by Barclaycard to the account one day after the due date. An interest payment of £15.08 was charged for this delayed

payment equivalent to an annualised interest rate of 998%!

If commercial companies could achieve this sort of benefit there would be cause for celebration of all late payments. But, would there be any customers left?

Yours faithfully,
K. COATSWORTH,
Quinag,
9 High Green,
Great Ayton,
Middlesbrough,
Cleveland.

No retaliation for turkey farmers

From Mrs B. G. Nicholas
Sir, Mr Webster (Business Letters, December 7) and "Argyll offers cheer", November 25) has gone off at a tangent. The argument was not about quantities but about his statement "a glut of turkeys dumped on the British market by mainly French producers had depressed the price, now 48p a pound against 59p on average last Christmas". He had no compunction in filling Argyll shelves with French birds.

British turkey growers cannot retaliate since no super-

market owner in France would be foolishly enough to risk having his premises burnt down by angry French farmers once they had set the British lorry ablaze. Yours faithfully,
B. G. NICHOLAS,
Policeman's Cottage,
Llandilo Crossenny,
Near Aberystwyth,
Gwent.

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[illegible]

186	108	Robison	146	+ 1	8.1	2.4
55	44	Storford	45	...	0.9	2.8
125	85	Chip & Regula	92	1.4
200	75	Cumtill Prop	120	...	2.4	2.7
453	103	Chemhardt	198	...	18.5	...
80	9	Chip Site Eng	20	...	1.4	...
40	5	Clarke Michale	12	...	0.3	...
32	8	Chaydon	10	...	...	...
996	785	Dugan	815	...	25.0	4.1
4		% Direct Estimation	14	...	...	...

139	2	De Morgan	4	...	...	...
175	76	Dancona	78	...	5.5	8.4
540	205	Deversen Midgen	268	...	8.8	3.9
287	200	Elstares Agency	282	...	...	10
96	6	Estates Glen	76	...	3.7	...
140	100	Evans Cot Leeds	130	...	4.1	4.3
31	14	Five Oaks	14	...	...	...
35	28	Fletcher King	30	...	1.0	4.4
328	188	Frederick -	371	+	1.50	7.4
129	51	Grangier	98	-	2	7.5
182	84	Gry Portland	113	+	3	11.8
114	65	Grycraft	91	...	3.2	...

48	10	Harmon Gray	20	...	0.0	0.3
389	189	Hammond	281	- 8	0.0	0.4
903	95	"do - 2"	289	-12	0.0	0.0
190	65	McCall, Joe	322	...	4.0	4.3
30	30	Henderson, Joe	20	...	...	...
179	24	Hendry, Walter	126	- 2	2.0	7.4
220	195	Hendry	148	...	1.5	1.4
494	343	Ham Sec	426	...	21.7	6.8
68	14	Ham, Walter Lee	73	...	3.8	6.9
2	1	Low & Moore	14	...	...	...
4	1	Low, Marjorie	4	...	...	...
413	198	McKee	305	- 5	...	6.9
		McKee, A.				

148	16	Norfolk	95	...	6.7	9.8
149	5	Norfolk	74	...	0.5	12.1
150	3	Norfolk	13	...	1.0	10.3
151	3	Norfolk	9	...	...	...
152	27	Norfolk	81	...	...	8.4
153	50	Norfolk	71	...	18.0	3.1
154	1	Norfolk	2	...	...	...
155	161	Norfolk (Ad)	112	...	8.9	7.1
156	3	Norfolk	46	+1	...	...
157	3	Norfolk	17	...	0.1	...
158	18	Norfolk	17	...	...	17.0
159	4	Norfolk	27	...	5.7	5.7
160	14	Norfolk	80	...	...	...

41	4 Regions	2	...	...	...
66	14 Regionals	10	...	1.3	19.5
175	34 Boroughs	7	...	...	...
150	120 Metropolitan Area	120	...	1.3	1.3
26	12 In Motion Pp	16	...	0.3	4.6
26	21 Swire	30	...	...	...
72	11 St Paul	34	...	1.3	3.9
26	30 St Paul	40	...	...	...
9	2 St Paul	...	...	...	...
11	1 St Paul	...	...	...	...
26	11 St Paul	...	...	0.9	9.9
26	83 St Paul	142	...	8.1	7.7
71	20 St Paul	...	...	4.1	120.2
26	2 St Paul	...	...	...	...

39	25	Turner	77	...	...	...
40	26	Johnson	78	...	...	...
41	27	Smith	79	...	...	...
42	28	Lee	80	...	...	...
43	29	White	81	...	...	...
44	30	Black	82	...	...	...
45	31	Green	83	...	...	...
46	32	Brown	84	...	...	...
47	33	Miller	85	...	...	...
48	34	Wilson	86	...	...	...
49	35	Davis	87	...	...	...
50	36	Evans	88	...	...	...
51	37	Roberts	89	...	...	...
52	38	Clark	90	...	...	...
53	39	Scott	91	...	...	...
54	40	Young	92	...	...	...
55	41	King	93	...	...	...
56	42	Wright	94	...	...	...
57	43	Green	95	...	...	...
58	44	White	96	...	...	...
59	45	Black	97	...	...	...
60	46	Brown	98	...	...	...
61	47	Miller	99	...	...	...
62	48	Wilson	100	...	...	...

SHOES, LEATHER					
26	9	Americana	12	...	...
99	42	Flamenco	94	0.1	2.4 1.5 3.6
428	265	Lambert	328	...	12.8 5.1 6.1
111	85	Minard Glemor	60	...	4.3 3.1 4.8
41	18	Strong & Fisher	10	...	1.0 7.0 5.5
168	88	Style	88	...	2.8 1.8 2.8

441	365	AJINKY Tom	399	...	123	4.1	14
73	47	Bockman (A)	34	...	4.7	11.8	...
...	...	Sutton Gp	...	...	...	...	...
162	138	Jr Mahan	149	...	8.5	8.2	11
...	...	Oswinton	76	-	1.2	2.0	...
...	...	Charwell	...	...	0.4	2.1	...
473	184	Clemens On	255	+ 2	...	...	19
330	364	Conradson Tnt	...	+ 8	13.0	9.3	...
528	160	Dawson	222	...	9.0	5.4	...
...	...	Drummond	...	...	1.5	...	...
78	17	...	...	...	...	...	...
73	43	Dunlop	...	...	...	...	...

142	34	Reyer Young	34	...	0.5	2.0	...
143	31	Quillen	...	...	0.3	...	...
144	39	Hickling Frost	144	+	1	3.4	3.1
79	...	Verment (S)	...	...	1.0	...	...
209	215	...	209	...	...	...	...
343	308	...	308	...	...	...	...
510	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
61	16	Leach	17	+	0.1	0.0	...
118	81	Lytle (S)	100	...	4.9	0.5	1.1
88	53	Perkins "A"	60	...	2.0	0.3	...
87	55	Rowland	74	...	3.4	0.2	1.4
71	30	REIT	30	...	...	...	...
91	67	Sluder	...	...	5.1	0.8	1.2
94	20	Schilling Op	43	+	...	5.1	1.7

312	198	Tomkinsville	223	+ 2	27.5	7.2	...
394	1	Wm. Trust	3	...	0.2	11.1	...
281	160	Rockledge	249	...	9.7	8.3	11.1

TOBACCO							
979	608	BAT	973	+ 5	33.6	4.6	7.3
664	489	Redington "B"	639	+ 4	10.2	2.2	14.1

TRANSPORT

440	211	Americ. Air Ports	341	- 7	8.0	3.1	73
775	231	BAA	789	- 0	14.5	2.5	13
319	529	Br Airways	328	+ 4	10.1	4.0	7
182	65	Clarifon	65	- 3	8.0	...	3
101	11	DeVries Reunion	21	#	...	...	...
486	281	Exxonmobil U.S.	334	- 5	...	...	...
160	44	Flower (Roses)	44	- 5	5.5	...	12
70	70	Grocery	137	...	4.5	4.4	1
202	148	Isola Steam	148	...	...	6.8	7
39	23	Japan's Oil	13	- 1	1.8	...	...

[illegible]

SE	SW	Eastings	Northings	Area	W	E	S	N
502	306	Anglian Water	485	+ 3	19.3	5.4	8.1	2.8
503	306	Northumbrian	565	1	+ 2	20.5	5.8	2.1
511	322	North West	476	1	+ 3	19.6	5.5	4.6
479	308	Servco Tanks	458	7	+ 3	19.3	5.0	6.6
485	301	Sidon Water	458			19.3	5.8	3.0
500	306	Six South	1190		...	40.3	4.5	7.8
504	306	South West	495	1	+ 2	21.2	5.8	7.7

468	337	Welsh Water	527	1	-3	21.4	5.4	6.8
469	266	Wessex Water	577	1	-	19.5	4.5	8.6
567	336	Yorkshire W.	525	1	-5	19.5	5.0	8.6

Source: Platts

US\$/t: @ Price at suspension; ! Ex dividend; ! E
 ship; ? Ex rights issue; & Ex all; ! Ex capital
 subscription; - Figures or report awaited; ...N
 significant data.

1

25	18	Alamo	149	1.5	1.4
26	19	Alamo	149	2.7	1.8
27	20	Alamo	149	3.8	3.9
28	21	Alamo	149	4.9	4.9
29	22	Alamo	149	5.9	5.9
30	23	Alamo	149	6.9	6.9
31	24	Alamo	149	7.9	7.9
32	25	Alamo	149	8.9	8.9
33	26	Alamo	149	9.9	9.9
34	27	Alamo	149	10.9	10.9
35	28	Alamo	149	11.9	11.9
36	29	Alamo	149	12.9	12.9
37	30	Alamo	149	13.9	13.9
38	31	Alamo	149	14.9	14.9
39	32	Alamo	149	15.9	15.9
40	33	Alamo	149	16.9	16.9
41	34	Alamo	149	17.9	17.9
42	35	Alamo	149	18.9	18.9
43	36	Alamo	149	19.9	19.9
44	37	Alamo	149	20.9	20.9
45	38	Alamo	149	21.9	21.9
46	39	Alamo	149	22.9	22.9
47	40	Alamo	149	23.9	23.9
48	41	Alamo	149	24.9	24.9
49	42	Alamo	149	25.9	25.9
50	43	Alamo	149	26.9	26.9
51	44	Alamo	149	27.9	27.9
52	45	Alamo	149	28.9	28.9
53	46	Alamo	149	29.9	29.9
54	47	Alamo	149	30.9	30.9
55	48	Alamo	149	31.9	31.9
56	49	Alamo	149	32.9	32.9
57	50	Alamo	149	33.9	33.9
58	51	Alamo	149	34.9	34.9
59	52	Alamo	149	35.9	35.9
60	53	Alamo	149	36.9	36.9
61	54	Alamo	149	37.9	37.9
62	55	Alamo	149	38.9	38.9
63	56	Alamo	149	39.9	39.9
64	57	Alamo	149	40.9	40.9
65	58	Alamo	149	41.9	41.9
66	59	Alamo	149	42.9	42.9
67	60	Alamo	149	43.9	43.9
68	61	Alamo	149	44.9	44.9
69	62	Alamo	149	45.9	45.9
70	63	Alamo	149	46.9	46.9
71	64	Alamo	149	47.9	47.9
72	65	Alamo	149	48.9	48.9
73	66	Alamo	149	49.9	49.9
74	67	Alamo	149	50.9	50.9
75	68	Alamo	149	51.9	51.9
76	69	Alamo	149	52.9	52.9
77	70	Alamo	149	53.9	53.9
78	71	Alamo	149	54.9	54.9
79	72	Alamo	149	55.9	55.9
80	73	Alamo	149	56.9	56.9
81	74	Alamo	149	57.9	57.9
82	75	Alamo	149	58.9	58.9
83	76	Alamo	149	59.9	59.9
84	77	Alamo	149	60.9	60.9
85	78	Alamo	149	61.9	61.9
86	79	Alamo	149	62.9	62.9
87	80	Alamo	149	63.9	63.9
88	81	Alamo	149	64.9	64.9
89	82	Alamo	149	65.9	65.9
90	83	Alamo	149	66.9	66.9
91	84	Alamo	149	67.9	67.9
92	85	Alamo	149	68.9	68.9
93	86	Alamo	149	69.9	69.9
94	87	Alamo	149	70.9	70.9
95	88	Alamo	149	71.9	71.9
96	89	Alamo	149	72.9	72.9
97	90	Alamo	149	73.9	73.9
98	91	Alamo	149	74.9	74.9
99	92	Alamo	149	75.9	75.9
100	93	Alamo	149	76.9	76.9
101	94	Alamo	149	77.9	77.9
102	95	Alamo			

29	42	Amesbury	91	...	2.4	1.5	3.0
428	265	Lowell	328	...	12.3	5.1	4.8
111	85	Merrimack	89	...	6.3	3.7	3.8
41	18	Strong & Fisher	19	...	1.0	7.0	...
169	88	Stylo	88	...	2.3	1.8	...

TEXTILES

By Region As Of 9/29/2000							
441	561	Alison Tom	399	...	12.3	4.1	14.0
73	47	Beckman W	84	...	4.7	11.8	10.0
52	33	Smith Gp	139	...	...	...	...
162	138	Dr Mathis	334	...	8.8	8.2	11.0
80	31	Quinn	79	- 1	1.2	2.0	...
41	23	Charvillat	38	...	0.4	2.1	...
270	184	Claremont On	270	+ 2	...	1.9	18.0
533	364	Courtyard TWR	533	+ 8	13.0	3.3	13.0

228	180	Dawson	222	100	5.4	21
229	17	Drummond	32	100	1.5	1
230	6	Drunkle	1	100	0.2	0
231	80	Fanpelt	63	100	10.5	6
232	24	Foster (John)	24	100	0.5	2
233	84	Galassi	84	100	8.3	11
234	99	Hickling Frost	148	+1	3.1	12
235	7	Jermine (J)	1	100	1.6	0
236	215	Kamout	234	100	6.8	11
237	308	Leotis	318	100	2.9	15
238	41					

118	81	17	...	4.7	6.9	...
119	105	180	...	4.9	6.5	11
87	63	80	...	3.0	4.5	...
77	50	74	...	2.4	4.2	14
91	30	30	...	...	...	...
44	29	30	...	5.1	4.8	13
96	31	42	...	2.6	5.1	17
312	198	223	+ 3	6.6	8.3	11
97	100	223	+ 3	11.7	7.2	...
291	168	248	...	8.2	11.1	...

TOBACCO					
979	608	BAJ	973	+ 5	31.6
664	480	Redmond "F"	639	+ 4	10.2

TRANSPORT						
440	211	Assoc Air Ports	341	- 7	8.0	3.1
798	531	BAA	789	- 0	14.5	2.5
315	229	Bir Airways	378	+ 4	10.1	4.0
182	45	Clarkson (12)	65	- 3	8.0	...
401	11	Derives Newman	23	#	...	...
858	203	Environmunt Ucs	324	- 5	...	...

790	94	Paster (James)	44	-	5	53	121
790	70	Gandy	127	...	...	4.4	...
790	148	John Stoen	...	...	...	...	...
790	148	Jackie GQ	...	6.2	1.9	8.6	17.1
790	31	Len O'Shea Pns	42	...	...	...	...
790	31	...	62	...	...	...	...
1512	1237	Wancher 5b	1362	...	...	...	...
1512	190	Merley Group	265	...	...	...	...
286	216	NFC	218	4.5	...	0.0	...
357	170	Osman Docks	218	...	16.3	3.2	21.8
357	31	Osman Wilson	...	...	...	8.2	9.9
925	289	F & CI 1169	47	...	...	...	...
925	289	F & CI 1169	47	...	...	...	...

1996	97	F & D S	16%	168	...	...	5.0	...
436	287	Powell Distributions	433	-1	32.6	7.0	17.7	...
117	96	Seacore	116	-1	...	...	...	...
39	23	TIP Europe	23	-1	1.4	7.9	3.1	...
82	24	TACT	24	...	...	...	...	...
610	...	Truett & Stone	609	...	...	2.4	20.1	...
476	214	Tipbork	314	+5	17.3	7.5	6.1	...
307	228	Transport Dev	252	+3	9.3	5.0	15.1	...

WATER							
502	308	Anglian Water	485	+ 3	19.3	5.4	8
567	536	Northumbrian	565	- 2	20.5	4.5	3
513	323	North West	476	+	19.6	5.5	8
499	286	Severn-Trent	458	+	19.3	5.0	6
485	301	Solihull Water	456	+ 3	19.5	5.8	8
520	620	5th Staffs	1190	...	40.2	4.5	7
536	306	South West	495	- 1	21.2	5.8	7

[illegible]

distribution; - Figures or report awaited; ... No significant data.

1950

ACCOUNTANCY

Fearless Sir Ron cracks a timely whip

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT

JUST when the accountancy profession thought it was safe to reappear in correct society, fully clad in the shining armour of reform, Sir Ron Dearing has spotted it. Unless self-regulation is given full support in the coming year, he argued, that armour could end in the scrapyard and regulation in the maw of the state.

The English Institute must wonder what it has to do. It played a big part in forming Sir Ron's Financial Reporting Council to set and enforce stronger accounting standards with the full authority of the business community, and in setting the agenda for the Cadbury code to help auditors impose good practice.

The six main accountancy bodies spawned the Auditing Practices Board, where outsiders helped map out a wider and stronger role for auditors. The three chartered institutes have beefed up arcane disciplinary procedures, injected vigour into ethical standards and set about their statutory duty to monitor and enforce standards in auditing firms.

Sir Ron's sour seasonal message, posted in the FRC's annual review, exposed the gap between creating new structures and making them work, let alone be seen to be working.

Thinking has moved so fast that the shape of self-regulation seems certain to change further. Illogically, the APB seems destined to come into the broader-based FRC, making Sir Ron even more the ringmaster. The profession's disciplinary system still looks transitional: parts fit with the APB, just as standard setting and enforcement go together.

After so much effort has "ready gone into change, the top priority is to achieve results. Ian Plaistowe, president of the ICAEW, argues that the

new system will have to run well at full speed for up to five years before accountants can say that company collapses are not due to audit failure. That is a dangerous period, explaining why Sir Ron chose to crack his whip.

Powerful companies were a prime target. If they continue to treat standard avoidance as a game like tax avoidance, regulators may not be able to keep pace. If they challenge the Review Panel in court, its authority might not stand up.

Accountants are just as capable of demolishing what the profession has built. While audit partners plan for new duties, higher status and bigger fees, others in leading firms will not want to lose high margin business in creative accountancy. Senior partners' leadership will face a stern test. So will the profession's will to punish firms that pass, without demerit, accounts that the Review Panel rejects, or finds dodgy but legal. The hard part may just be starting.

Walking back to happiness

DAVID McDonnell, globe-trotting managing partner of Grant Thornton, has been looking leaner and fitter of late. Struck by his dapper photograph in the firm's 1992 annual review, compared with a rather more portly one in 1990, *Any Other Business* enquired if he had been on a diet. "I have lost 2½ stone in eight months," says a happier McDonnell, 49, who reveals his secret is walking at high speed between venues in London, Manchester, Chicago and Paris. "I have worked out a specific walk in each city and carry a pair of trainers



ANOTHER BUSINESS



McDonnell: leaner

with me." New accounting developments have not affected his resolve. "I have to

forego Cadbury in all its forms," he quips.

Getting ahead

BOB Shinn, head of KPMG Management Consulting, came face to face with the Prince of Wales last week — and was left holding a ceramic bowl. The occasion was a ceremony at the Royal National Theatre, London, when the firm was commended for its sponsorship of the arts. The Tate Gallery, the National and English National Opera are among beneficiaries. Shinn is still deciding what to do with the hat.

On the cards

HAVE the Scots and the English finally buried the hatchet? The English Institute is offering members the chance of an affinity credit card bearing the ICA crest and providing a range of discounts and incentives. One snag. The card is issued by the Bank of Scotland. "This is not a hint at a new merger attempt," says Trevor D'Cruz, managing director of Accountancy Business Group, the institute's commercial arm. "It is part of the wider service we are offering to members." Don't wait for the Scots to launch a card backed by the Bank of England.

JON ASHWORTH

Changing small firm audits raises the ire

IT is surprising how heated discussions can become over a subject so mundane as the statutory audit of small companies. For the companies concerned, much of the auditor's work is grindingly irrelevant. For the auditors it is frustrating that so much of the fee which they earn has to be spent in statutory work, leaving little leeway for useful advisory work. But announce that the legal obligation for a small audit should be lifted, and a surprising number of people react startlingly.

Take the British Bankers' Association. In its submission to the English ICA on reforming the statutory audit of small companies, it welcomes measures that mean little but expresses great suspicion of real change. Earlier this year, the English ICA suggested getting rid of small audits and replacing them with a review, which would mean that accountants still received the imprimatur of a qualified auditor, but the work would be widened to include more advice and help. The BBA explains that the only reason it opposed the proposals previously was that the £2 million turnover threshold suggested was "far too high". But times have changed. "The institute initiative, in offering a menu of recommendations for consideration, has now made it possible for the BBA to respond more positively," it says. And what form does this positive response take? "We are pleased, therefore, to inform you that the banks support the proposal that an exemption from audit should be extended to companies under the VAT registration threshold of £56,000," it says. It then lists four further conditions, including that "the accounts themselves should still encompass the same information as those subject to audit".

This is, frankly, rubbish. Any company with a turnover of less than £56,000 should not be a company in the first place. The companies that need the real help are those the BBA ignores. Companies with a turnover of up to £2 million, which the BBA thinks should not be allowed the dangerous and irresponsible financial and business advice which a non-statutory audit review would bring them, are precisely those which need it. The BBA, and everyone else involved in this debate, would do well to read a new research document from the Scots ICA. This argues that companies which want to disincorporate should be allowed to do so with ease and that the statutory audit should be replaced by an

annual accountant's report. The thinking behind the working party's report is sensible and informed. One reason for this is that the working party was chaired by one Primrose McCabe. In a year-and-a-half's time, she will become the first woman to be made president of the Scots ICA. She is also a noted small practitioner who knows both what the Department of Trade and Industry is thinking and what small companies in the industrial belt of Scotland are thinking. Twenty years ago it made sense, particularly for tax reasons, for small businesses to become companies. But now, as the report says, "they are locked into a position that has turned to their disadvantage as a result of regulatory and other legislative changes". There are two important points to bear in mind. As the report says, "in a small business there is little distinction between ownership and management". "The reality of the situation for small companies is that few actually have limited liability as a result of being required by banks to give personal guarantees and security over personal assets." The other side of the bargain is that after the tax and legal proposals which the Scots put forward for freeing up the methods of disincorporation, the statutory audit for small companies should also be replaced. There is much sense in this. Companies at this level are already hedged around to a great extent with inland revenue requirements, or VAT, which ensure that a comprehensive accounting system is in place. "By removing the necessity of an audit for small companies," the report says, "audit firms would be able to save the administration time

involved in complying with audit regulation requirements for these clients. This time could be devoted more usefully to assisting the company in areas that have a direct impact on the profitability and future growth of the business". And that really is it. The regulators would still have the comfort of a report by a qualified auditor. The businesses would have audit savings, which the Scots estimate to be about 25 per cent of existing fees, which would be available to re-invest in advice and help for the business. If the profession could unite on this, it might find the government would happily come up with the goods.

The author is Associate Editor of Accountancy Age.



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European Law Report

Luxembourg

Sunday trading restrictions are not against Community law

Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Another v B & Q plc

Case C-164/91
Before O. Duc, President and Judges C. N. Kakouris, G. C. Rodríguez Iglesias, J. Murray, G. F. Mancini, R. Joliet, M. Díez de Velasco, P. J. G. Kapteyn and D. A. O. Edwards

Advocate General V. Van Gerven
[Opinion July 8]
[Judgment December 16]

The restrictive effects on trade of national rules prohibiting shops from opening on Sundays were not excessive in relation to the aim pursued.

The Court of Justice of the European Communities held in reply to questions submitted to it by the House of Lords for a preliminary ruling.

In proceedings brought by the Council of the City of Stoke-on-Trent and Norwich City Council against B & Q plc, the two prosecuting authorities accused

B & Q of contravening sections 47 and 50 of the Shops Act 1950 by opening their shops on Sundays for commercial transactions other than those listed in the Fifth Schedule to that Act.

The Fifth Schedule to the Shops Act 1950 contained a list of items which, by way of exception, might be sold in shops on Sundays. They included, in particular, intoxicating liquors, certain foodstuffs, tobacco, newspapers, and other products of everyday consumption.

In the proceedings before the House of Lords, before which the cases were pending at last instance, it became apparent that the parties differed as to the interpretation of the above-mentioned Court's judgments in, on the one hand, Case C-145/88 *Touffain Borough Council v B & Q plc* (The Times November 24, 1989) [1989] ECR 3851 and, on the other, Case C-312/89 *Union Départementale des Syndicats CDT de l'Aisne v Conforama* (The Times March

6, 1991) [1991] ECR I-997 and Case 332/89 *Marchandise* (The Times March 6, 1991) [1991] ECR I-1027.

In view of the dispute as to the proper interpretation of the above-mentioned judgments, the House of Lords stayed the proceedings and referred three questions to the Court of Justice for a preliminary ruling.

In its judgment the Court of Justice ruled as follows:

Applicability of Article 30
The national court's first question sought to determine whether it followed from the Court's judgments in *Conforama* and *Marchandise* that the prohibition laid down in article 30 of the Treaty did not apply to national legislation such as that in question. The same legislation had been the subject of the Court's judgment in the *Touffain Borough Council* case, cited above.

In those three judgments the Court had found that the various bodies of national legislation concerning the closing of shops on Sundays were not intended to regulate the flow of goods.

It was also apparent from those judgments that such legislation might indeed have adverse repercussions on the volume of sales of certain shops, but that it affected the sale of both domestic and imported products. The marketing of products from other member states was not therefore made more difficult than the marketing of national products.

Furthermore, the above-mentioned judgments the Court had recognised that the legislation at issue pursued an aim which was justified under Community law. National rules restricting the opening of shops on Sundays reflected certain choices relating to particular national or regional social characteristics.

It was for the member states to make those choices in compliance with the requirements of Community law, in particular the principle of proportionality.

As far as that principle was concerned, the Court had stated in its judgment in the *Touffain Borough Council* case that such rules were not prohibited by article 30 of the Treaty where the restrictive effects on Community trade which might result from them did not exceed the effects intrinsic to such rules and that the question whether the effects of those rules actually resulted within that limit was a question of fact to be determined by the national court.

In its judgments in the *Conforama* and *Marchandise* cases, however, the Court found it necessary to make clear, with regard to similar rules, that the restrictive effects on trade which might result from them did not appear to be excessive in relation to the aim pursued.

The Court considered that it had all the information necessary for it to rule on the question of the proportionality of such rules and that it had to do so in order to enable national courts to assess their compatibility with Community law in a uniform manner since such an assessment could not be allowed to vary according to the findings of fact made by individual courts in particular cases.

Appraising the proportionality of national rules which pursued a legitimate aim under Community law involved weighing the national interest in attaining that aim against the Community interest in ensuring the free movement of goods.

In that regard, in order to verify that the restrictive effects on intra-Community trade of the rules at issue did not exceed what was necessary to achieve the aim in view, it had to be considered whether those effects were direct, indirect or purely speculative and whether those effects did not impede the marketing of imported products more than the marketing of national products.

It was on the basis of those considerations that in its judgments in the *Conforama* and *Marchandise* cases the Court had ruled that the restrictive effects on trade of national rules prohibiting the employment of workers on Sundays in certain retailing activities were not excessive in relation to the aim pursued.

For the same reasons, the Court had to make the same finding with regard to national rules prohibiting shops from opening on Sundays.

In view of the answer given to the first question, it was unnecessary to give a ruling on the second and third questions.

On those grounds, the Court ruled: Article 30 of the Treaty was to be interpreted as meaning that the prohibition which it laid down did not apply to national legislation prohibiting retailers from opening their premises on Sundays.

House of Lords

Law Report December 17 1992

House of Lords

Limitation period for non-accidental injury

Monopolies Commission has power to rule on bus companies' merger

Stubbings v Webb and Another

Before Lord Templeman, Lord Bridge of Harwich, Lord Griffiths, Lord Ackner and Lord Slynn of Hadley
[Speeches December 16]

Claims for personal injuries arising out of complaints of indecent assault or rape were subject to the six-year limitation period set out in section 2 of the Limitation Act 1980, running from the date when the cause of action accrued.

Section 11 of the Act, which made provision for a three-year period for personal injuries resulting from the date of accrual or the date of realisation of the significance of the injuries, if later, was only applicable to accident cases.

Accordingly, a plaintiff's claim against her stepfather and stepbrother for damages for personal injuries, including psychiatric disorders, suffered in her adult life as a result of alleged sexual abuse as a child, having been commenced more than six years after the accrual of the cause of action, was statute-barred.

The House of Lords so held in allowing an appeal by the defendants, James Francis Webb and his son Stephen, from the order of the Court of Appeal (Sir Nicolas Browne-Wilkinson, Vice-Chancellor, Lord Justice Bingham and Lord Justice Nourse dissenting) [1992] QB 197, upholding the order of Mr Justice Potter, who had held, under section 11, that the plaintiff, Lesley Jacqueline Stubbings, had realised that her injuries were significant only in September 1984, less than three years before the expiry of her writ in August 1987, and that she was entitled to pursue her claim against the defendants.

Mr Justice Potter had overturned a decision of Master Topley that the claim was statute-barred.

Mr Richard Mawrey, QC and Mr Lawrence West for James Webb; Mr Kieran Connan, QC

and Mr Roy Warne for Stephen Webb; Mr Maurice Kay, QC and Mr Robert Grey for the plaintiff.

LORD GRIFFITHS said that the plaintiff would be 30 years of age in January 1993. The question before the House was whether the law permitted her to pursue a claim for damages against her adoptive father and stepbrother based upon allegations that she was sexually abused by the adoptive father between the ages of two and 14 and raped by her stepbrother when she was 13 and he was 17. The allegations were denied by both the father and stepbrother.

By section 2 of the Limitation Act 1980 actions founded on simple contract or tort were not to be brought after the expiration of six years from the date on which the cause of action accrued.

In 1949 the Tucker Committee (Report on the Limitation of Actions Cmd 7740) recommended that the limitation period for personal injury actions should be two years with the possibility of a judicial extension to six years.

It was obvious when reading the report that the committee was concerned with recommendations in respect of actions for personal injury to accident cases: "We do not think it is necessary for us to define 'personal injuries'... however... we do not include... actions for trespass to the person, false imprisonment, malicious prosecution, or defamation of character."

It could not be open to doubt that the plaintiff's complaints of sexual abuse and rape fell within the category of an action for trespass to the person referred to in the above paragraph.

The committee were therefore recommending that such actions should continue to be governed by the six-year period of limitation.

The recommendations were given effect to by the Law Reform (Limitation of Actions) Act 1954, which instead of a limitation

period of two years with the possibility of judicial extension to six years, it was decided to introduce a period of three years with no option to extend it.

This section 2(1) provided that "... in the case of actions for damages for negligence, nuisance or breach of duty... in respect of personal injuries there shall be a limitation period of three years."

In *Letang v Cooper* [1965] 1 QB 233 it was held that "breach of duty" should be construed as applying to any cause of action which gave rise to a claim for damages for personal injury.

Section 11 of the 1980 Act, in identical language to section 2(1) of the 1954 Act, provided: "(1)... any action for damages for negligence, nuisance or breach of duty... shall not be brought after the expiration of... (4)... three years from— (a) the date on which the cause of action accrued; or (b) the date of knowledge (if later) of the person injured."

By section 14 the date of knowledge was "the date on which [the person] first had knowledge... (a) that the injury in question was significant; and (b) that the injury was attributable... to the act or omission which is alleged to constitute negligence, nuisance or breach of duty."

In the present case, the principal argument in the Court of Appeal had focused upon whether or not the plaintiff had known she had suffered significant injury over three years before she commenced her action on August 18, 1987.

The plaintiff's case was that although she knew that she had been raped by one defendant and had been persistently sexually abused by the other she did not realise she had suffered sufficiently serious injury to justify proceedings for damages until she realised in September 1984 that there might be a causal link between psychiatric problems she

had suffered in adult life and her sexual abuse as a child.

The Court of Appeal had accepted that argument, if it had been necessary to decide the point. His Lordship should not have found it easy to agree.

He had the greatest difficulty in accepting that a woman who knew that she had been raped did not know that she had suffered a significant injury.

Sexual abuse that went no further than indecent fondling of a child raised a more difficult question, but some of the plaintiff's allegations were so serious that his Lordship should have had difficulty in regarding them as other than significant.

However it was not necessary to resolve that difficult issue as his Lordship accepted the defendants' submission that section 11(1) did not apply to a cause of action based on negligence, nuisance or breach of duty which the limitation period was six years and which was not subject to extension under section 11.

The Court of Appeal had considered themselves to be bound by *Letang v Cooper*. His Lordship could not accept that view.

Section 2(1) of the 1954 Act had the effect of including all actions in which damages for personal injuries were claimed.

The draftsman had limited the section to actions for negligence, nuisance and breach of duty and the reason he did so was to give effect to the recommendation of the Tucker Committee.

The House could now look at *Hansard* and could see that it was the express intention of Parliament to give effect to the committee's recommendation. See *Hansard* December 4, 1953, column 1545; May 25, 1954, column 325.

Even without reference to *Hansard*, his Lordship should not have construed breach of duty as including a deliberate assault.

The phrase lying in juxtaposition with negligence and nuisance carried with it the implication of a breach of a duty of care not to cause personal injury, rather than an obligation not to inflict any legal right of another person.

If one invited a lady to one's house one would naturally think of a duty to take care that the house was safe but would one really be thinking of a duty not to rape her? However, that might be the terms in which the Bill had been introduced made it clear beyond peradventure that the intention was to give effect to the Tucker recommendation that the limitation period in respect of trespass to the person was not to be reduced to three years but should remain at six years.

The language of section 2(1) of the 1954 Act was apt to give effect to that intention, and cases of deliberate assault such as in the instant case were not actions for breach of duty within the meaning of section 2(1).

The language of section 2(1) had been carried without alteration into the Limitation Act 1975 and then into section 1(1) of the 1980 Act where it had to bear the same meaning as it had in the 1954 Act.

It thus followed that the plaintiff's cause of action against both defendants were subject to a six-year limitation period.

That period was suspended during her infancy by commencing to run when she had attained her majority: see section 28 of the 1980 Act.

That period had expired many years before she had issued her writ. There were no provisions for extending that period and her claim was therefore statute-barred and could not proceed.

LORD TEMPLEMAN, Lord Bridge, Lord Ackner and Lord Slynn agreed.

Solicitors: Sharpe Pritchard for Birkett Westphal & Long, Colchester and Greenwood, Page & Ward, Colchester; Fisher Jones, Colchester.

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Regina v Monopolies and Mergers Commission and Another, Ex parte South Yorkshire Transport Ltd and Another

Before Lord Templeman, Lord Goff of Chieveley, Lord Lowry, Lord Mustill and Lord Slynn of Hadley
[Speeches December 16]

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission had jurisdiction to investigate a merger in relation to a substantial part of the United Kingdom within the meaning of section 64(3) of the Fair Trading Act 1973, where the reference was of such size, character and importance as to make it worth consideration for the purposes of the Act.

The House of Lords so held in allowing an appeal by the commission and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry from the decision of the Court of Appeal (Lord Donaldson of Lynton, Master of the Rolls and Lord Justice Bingham, Lord Justice Nourse dissenting) [1992] 1 WLR 2911 of their appeal from the decision of Mr Justice Oton on (The Times April 9, 1991) whereby he granted the applicants, South Yorkshire Transport Ltd and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority, a declaration that the commission had no jurisdiction to consider the merger of the bus companies which operated against the public interest, and a decision of the Secretary of State to accept that conclusion were unlawful.

Mr Michael Bellof, QC and Mr A. W. H. Charles for the appellants; Mr David Pannick, QC, for the respondents.

LORD MUSTILL said that on the reference, the commission's first task had been to decide whether the "merger situation" was one which satisfied the criteria for investigation established by section 64(3) of the Fair Trading Act 1973. If it did not, the commission had no jurisdiction.

The applicants contended by judicial review the commission's finding that the geographical area by reference to which the existence of a merger situation had to be ascertained was a "substantial part" of the United Kingdom within section 64(3).

The reference area, as delineated by the Secretary of State, was the county of South Yorkshire, the districts of Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dale, High Peak and North East Derbyshire, and of Basildon. The total area was rather more than 1,500 square miles and about 1.8 million people lived there.

Those figures represented 1.63 per cent and 3.2 per cent of the totals for the United Kingdom as a whole.

The interpretation of section 64(3) had to proceed by two stages: first, a general appreciation of what "substantial" meant in its present context; second, a consideration of the elements to be taken into account when deciding whether the requirements of the word, so understood, were satisfied.

No recourse to dictionaries was needed to establish that "substantial" accommodated a wide range of meanings; at one extreme "not trifling"; at the other "nearly complete". It was sufficient to say that, although his Lordship did not accept that "substantial" could never mean "more than de minimis", in section 64(3) it lay further up the spectrum.

His Lordship was glad to adopt, as a means of giving a general indication of where it lay within the range of possible meanings, the expression of Lord Justice Nourse in the Court of Appeal: "worthy of consideration for the purposes of the Act".

If the commission, proceeding, when examining its jurisdiction, on the basis that it was enough for the reference area to be more than trifling, then that was a radical misconception. However, although one could appreciate why the courts below held that the commission had entirely misunderstood the content of the words "a substantial part", examination of their report did not disclose that fundamental mistake.

There remained the question whether, even if the commission had placed the test in broadly the right part of the spectrum, it nevertheless failed to apply the test correctly.

Here the contrast was between (i) striking an arithmetical proportion between the reference area and the United Kingdom as a whole; (ii) an assessment in absolute terms of the size and importance of the area; and (iii) a mixture of the two kinds of criterion.

Although the relationship of the part to the whole was not to be ignored, proportionality was not the beginning and end of the matter. As to geographical extent, the reference to a substantial part of the United Kingdom was enabling, not restrictive. The word "substantial" was there to ensure that the extensive and time-consuming mechanism of a merger reference was not set in motion if the effort was not worth worthwhile.

It was clear that there was no cut-off point fixed by reference to

geography and arithmetic alone. Similarly, the argument that the decisive factor consisted of a comparison between the number of bus-miles run by the services under investigation and those in the country as a whole was very hard to square with the phrase "part of the United Kingdom" which were surely intended to relate to the area itself, and not, at any rate primarily, to the market share of the area.

Where the task was to interpret an enabling provision, designed to confer on the commission the power to investigate mergers believed to be against the public interest, the court should lean against an interpretation which would give the commission jurisdiction over references of the present kind. In only a small minority of cases.

That was the more so in the particular context of local bus services, since that was a matter of importance to the public.

Although his Lordship was reluctant to propose a test, it would be helpful to endow with one qualification, the formulation of Lord Justice Nourse as a general guide and to state that the part must be of such size, character and importance as to make it worth consideration for the purposes of the Act.

Applying that test, one asked first, whether any misdirection was established and, second, whether the decision could be overturned on its facts. As to the first, it was quite clear that the approach of the commission was in general accord with what his Lordship proposed.

On the second question, the parties were at odds as to the proper function of the courts. Once the criterion for a judgment had been properly understood, the judgment proceeded unequivocally on that basis; so far, no room for controversy. But that clear-cut approach could not be applied to every case, for the criterion established might itself be so imprecise that different decision-makers, each acting rationally, might reach different conclusions.

In such a case the court was entitled to substitute its own opinion only if the decision was so aberrant that it could not be classified as rational. In the present case there was no ground for interference, since the conclusion at which the commission arrived was well within the permissible field of judgment and, in his Lordship's opinion, was right.

LORD TEMPLEMAN, Lord Goff, Lord Lowry and Lord Slynn agreed.

Solicitors: Treasury Solicitor; Shipson Curtis, Leeds.

Expert not required to prove operation of computer

Regina v Shephard

Before Lord Griffiths, Lord Emslie, Lord Roskill, Lord Ackner and Lord Lowry
[Speeches December 16]

Where reliance was placed on statements in a document produced by a computer, the requirement in section 69(1) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 for it to be shown that the computer had been operating properly could be satisfied by the oral evidence of a person familiar with the operation of the computer who could give evidence of its reliability and such a person need not be a computer expert.

The House of Lords so held in dismissing an appeal by Hilary Shephard from the order of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) [Lord Justice Lloyd, Mr Justice Leonard and Mr Justice Beldfield, (1991) 93 Cr App R 139] dismissing her appeal against conviction on October 27, 1989 at St Albans Crown Court of her offence of theft, contrary to section 1(1) of the Theft Act 1968.

The Court of Appeal had certified the following point of law of general public importance: "Whether a party seeking to rely on computer evidence could be charged the burden under section 69(1) of the 1984 Act without calling a computer expert, and if so how?"

Mr Christopher Llewellyn-Jones, QC and Mr Robert Leonard for the defendant; Mr Brian Barker, QC and Mrs Esther Kacman for the Crown.

LORD GRIFFITHS said that the defendant had been arrested on March 17, 1989. Various items of food and clothing from Marks & Spencers for which she had no receipt were found in her car. She said that she had bought the goods at Marks & Spencers but that she

never kept receipts and she denied stealing the goods.

The principal evidence for the prosecution was given by Marks & Spencers. She said that on the morning of March 18 she had removed all the till rolls from the tills.

She explained that the tills were connected to a central computer which fed in the date, time, customer number and till number on each of the till rolls. She had carried out an examination of all the till rolls in use on March 17 and there had been no record on them of the items found in the defendant's car.

It was quite apparent from the store detective's evidence that she was thoroughly familiar with the operation of the tills and of the computer, albeit she did not pretend to any technical understanding of the operation of the computer.

The defendant did not give evidence and was convicted. If the till rolls were properly admitted in evidence that was hardly surprising for they provided the most powerful evidence of guilt.

It was, however, submitted that the till rolls should not have been admitted in evidence because the store detective's evidence did not satisfy the provisions of section 69(1) in any proceedings, a statement in a document produced by a computer shall not be admissible as evidence of any fact stated therein unless it is shown— (i) that at all material times the computer was operating properly...

Such a duty could not be discharged without evidence by the application of the presumption that the computer was working correctly expressed in the maxim *omnia presumuntur rite esse acta*, as appeared to be suggested in some of the cases.

Nor did it make any difference whether the computer document had been produced with or without the input of information provided by the human mind and thus might or might not be hearsay.

If the document produced by the computer was hearsay it would be necessary to consider whether the provisions of section 24 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, the successor to section 68 of the 1984 Act, before the document could be admitted as evidence and it would also be necessary to comply with the provisions of section 24.

There was no warrant for an interpretation of the Act which limited the operation of section 69 to cases that fell within sections 68 or 24, as construed by the Court of Appeal in *R v Milner* [1989] 1 WLR 411, which had been followed in a number of subsequent cases most notably *R v Spiby* (The Times March 16, 1990) [1990] 93 Cr App R 180 and *R v Neville* [1991] Crim LR 288.

If the prosecution wished to rely upon a document produced by a computer they had to comply with section 69 in all cases.

The principal argument for the defendant started with the proposition that the store detective was not "a person occupying a responsible position in relation to the operation of the computer" within the meaning of paragraph 8 of Schedule 3 to the 1984 Act and therefore was not qualified to sign a certificate for the purpose of providing proof of the matters contained in section 69(1).

That his Lordship accepted. Although the store detective understood the operation of the computer and could speak of its reliability she had no responsibility for its operation.

However, he could not accept the near step in the defendant's argument which was that oral

evidence was only acceptable if given by a person who was qualified to sign the certificate.

The defendant did not go so far as to submit that evidence had to be given by a computer expert but insisted that it had to be by someone who had responsibility for the operation of the computer: either the operator or someone with managerial responsibility for the operation of the computer.

Proof that the computer was reliable could be provided in two ways. Either by calling oral evidence or by tendering a written certificate in accordance with paragraph 8.

It was understandable that if a certificate was to be relied upon it should show on its face that it was signed by a person who was qualified to sign it. It was not a job description could confidently be expected to be in a position to give reliable evidence about the operation of the computer.

That enabled the accused to decide whether to accept the certificate on its face value or to ask a judge to require oral evidence which could be challenged in cross-examination.

An accused seeing a certificate signed by a store detective would not necessarily assume that such a person was familiar with the operation of a computer and might well challenge the certificate.

It did not, however, follow that the store detective could not in fact give evidence that showed she was fully familiar with the operation of the store's computer and could speak for its reliability.

The defendant's argument required one to read into section 69(1) after the words "one is shown" the following words lifted from paragraph 8 of Schedule 3: "by the oral evidence of a person occupying a responsible position in relation to the operation of the computer."

Those words did not appear in

the section. They were, for the reasons given, contained in Schedule 3 as a necessary qualification to sign a certificate but there was no reason to read them into section 69(1) when oral evidence would be open to challenge by cross-examination.

Computers varied immensely in their complexity and in the operations they performed.

The nature of the evidence to discharge the burden of showing that there had been no improper use of the computer and that it had been operating properly would inevitably vary from case to case. The evidence had to be tailored to suit the needs of the case.

His Lordship suspected that it would rarely be necessary to call an expert and that in the vast majority of cases it would be possible to discharge the burden by calling a witness who was familiar with the operation of the computer in the sense of knowing what the computer was required to do and who could say that it was doing it properly.

The computer in the instant case was of the simplest kind printing limited basic information on each till roll.

The store detective had been fully qualified to give the evidence required by section 69 and in the absence of oral evidence the till rolls had been properly admitted as part of the prosecution case.

His Lordship would therefore answer the certified question by saying that section 69(1) could be satisfied by the oral evidence of a person familiar with the operation of the computer who could give evidence of its reliability and such a person need not be a computer expert.

LORD EMSLIE, Lord Roskill, Lord Ackner and Lord Lowry agreed.

Solicitors: Ellis & Hancock, Watford; CPS Headquarters.



THEATRE page 28
Bob Kingdom makes a bewitching impression as Dylan Thomas in a one-man show

ARTS

TELEVISION page 29
Childhood innocence confronts the restrictions of colonial society in *The Hummingbird Tree*



CINEMA: Geoff Brown reviews *Chaplin*, the latest of Richard Attenborough's 'quality, middle-brow entertainments'

Such a long haul for the little fellow

Chaplin Odeon Leicester Square (12)
The Muppet Christmas Carol MGM Haymarket, Odeon Kensington (U)
The Princess and the Goblin Odeon Kensington (U)
Cool World MGM Trocadero (12)
Mo' Money MGM Haymarket (15)

The tramp silhouette, framed in a doorway, a stark, almost funereal composition in black and white. The legend: "He made the whole world laugh and cry. He will again." But will he?

Despite the film poster's optimism, and the good wishes of all who support Richard Attenborough's quality, middle-brow entertainments—especially one that was ditched by Universal six weeks before the scheduled start and remounted, refinanced, from scratch—the fact remains that Chaplin will need to fight hard for an audience.

Times change. Great-grandparents of today's young moviegoers might have laughed at the Little Tramp's smiles and pirouettes, his droll antics with hat and cane, bread rolls on forks, or policemen's backsides. But current youth is hugely uninterested in cinema's past; many in America only know the Tramp as an advertising symbol for IBM. And for those cinematically literate, Chaplin has long been unfashionable, especially in Britain. We may admire Chaplin's pantomime skills, his blending of slapstick with sentiment. But we actually laugh at Buster Keaton.

Here, Attenborough's casting may help. For the 26-year-old American Robert Downey Jr (son of the director of *Purple Heart*) has already won susceptible hearts, even in rubbish such as *Aladdin*. Chaplin stretches his talents enormously. He emerges victorious from his lengthy assault course with experts on English accents and pratfalls, though he lacks Chaplin's expressive eyes and ultimately falls victim to prosthetics: by the film's end he is aged 83, a fit companion to Bette Midler's latest grotesque in *For The Boys*.

Attenborough, though, was asking for trouble by squeezing so much of Chaplin's life into a single feature film. The narrative stretches from 1894, when young Charlie makes his supposed stage debut before Aldershot soldiers, to 1972, when he returns to America after 20 years' exile to receive his special Oscar. In between comes a jittery kaleidoscope of marriages and

divorces, friends (Douglas Fairbanks), enemies (J. Edgar Hoover), famous incidents, famous films.

Facts get garbled and situations caricatured, which might not matter if we were still served a solid dramatic meal; but the troubled labours of the writers (chiefly William Boyd and William Goldman) produce little more than a television dinner, with 15 guest stars to match. Here's Dan Aykroyd as Mack Sennett, and Kevin Kline as Fairbanks.

Moira Kelly takes care of Charlie's first love Hattie, and his last, Oona. Geraldine Chaplin provides a unique *frisson* playing her own grandmother, Hannah, her sanity destroyed, kneading biscuits into crumbs.

Goldman's special contribution was the scattered scenes of an aged Charlie in his Swiss exile, working with Anthony Hopkins' fictitious editor on his autobiography. Designed to bond the fragmentary script, they appear as jolting intrusions that harm one of the film's chief assets: its sense of place. For Attenborough's team make a fine job of re-imagining the grim pauper's London of Chaplin's youth.

That done, cameraman Sven Nykvist works a stunning conjuring trick, flooding the screen with golden light for Charlie's first glimpse of California. Attenborough also catches the exuberance of film pioneers: one fetching scene shows Rollie Totheroh, long Chaplin's editor, cutting celluloid with his teeth.

But as this valiant but deeply flawed film wends its way from early shorts to *City Lights* and beyond, from disastrous marriages to late-flowering bliss with Oona, it becomes increasingly clear that key pieces in the story are missing. We get no sense that Chaplin was plucked from Victorian obscurity to become the most famous, richest man in the world. More crucially still, despite Downey's skills at mimicry there is never enough footage of Charlie performing, simply being funny.

Without this, Charlie appears no comic genius but a troubled, rather unsympathetic figure, whose creative juices become drained by



Marisa Tomei as Mabel Normand succumbing to the charm of Robert Downey Jr as the Little Tramp, in a film within the new film biography of Charlie Chaplin

domestic misfortune, his own pretensions and the enmity of the FBI. As the minutes roll on (the film clocks in at two hours, 20 minutes), Chaplin grows unduly melancholic, a saddening tale of restless desire and ambition, fear and exile. This will aggravate those expecting a jolly salute to a famous funnyman. It is also, perhaps, an unfortunate choice for this year's Royal Film.

The Queen could do with some cheering up. Chaplin was conceived and post-produced in Britain, though all the finance came from abroad. The Muppet Christmas Carol, largely delightful, could also be claimed as quasi-British, through its source material (good old Charles Dickens), its host studio, Shepperton, and the presence of Michael Caine. This is the Muppets' first movie since Jim Henson's death, and the

first to nix them into a strong, familiar storyline. There is enough foolery and magic to please young children, though they may start wriggling when the soft-toy superstars take a back seat to Caine's Scrooge. Unlike earlier extravaganzas, these Muppets never get out of hand; adults in tow should be especially pleased.

The script closely follows Dickens, even though Bob Cratchit and wife are really Kermit and Miss Piggy, wrapped in Victorian clothes. The rest of Henson's menagerie fill the attractive, stylised, snow-bound sets; aside from Scrooge, real humans are scarce.

A mean grimace comes hard to the genial Caine, which upsets some of the story's force. Still, director Brian Henson (son of Jim) makes amends once Scrooge meets

his three Ghosts. True, the bulbous, hairy Ghost of Christmas Present will curl a few toes (imagine Brian Blessed times three); but the episode with Christmas Yet to Come, a gnarled grey faceless shroud, casts a genuine icy spell.

The film comes bedecked with passable Paul Williams songs, though the weakest should not have been left for Caine's vocal cords. When he bleats "I Will Hold You Close in a Thankful Heart" we know that Pavarotti has nothing to worry about.

The Princess and the Goblin, directed by Josef Gimes, brings another children's book to the screen, but with far less success. When originally published in 1871, George MacDonald's fantasy about a sheltered princess combating goblins boasted Arthur Hughes' atmospheric illustrations.

Now the tale is peopled by humdrum characters, blandly drawn in a simple style best left to television. This is a Welsh-Hungarian co-production, of which there cannot be many. It may just pass muster with families desperate for something harmless, but it by-passes cinema's magic.

So what do adults get for Christmas? *Cool World* for one: an exhausting mixed media exercise from Rajph Bakshi, the self-consciously hip director of *Fritz the Cat* and *Heavy Traffic*. He has been ominously quiet for a while. Now he rushes back, tooting trumpets with a technically ingenious but highly resistible tale of two parallel worlds. In the animated "cool world", lewd, manic creatures leap around like Warner Brothers cartoon characters on speed. Meanwhile, in live-action Las Vegas, Gabriel Byrne's comic-book artist gets sucked into his own imaginings, while his sexpot creation Hollie Would (ha ha) leaps from ink to flesh and becomes Kim Basinger. This is a film with brilliance aplenty, but no gleam of warmth, no breathing space for frazzled spectators, and, ultimately, no point.

Life is hardly quieter in *Mo' Money*, a belligerent gag-and-bloodshed romp from director Peter Macdonald, designed to showcase his young writer-star Damon Wayans and his even younger brother, Marlon. They play two street punks mixed up in a credit card fraud; but what price a coherent plot when there are faces to pull, gays to mock, and bodies to pepper with holes? If this is grown-up cinema, give me Peter Rabbit.

Taking the Americans to Court

ARTS BRIEFING

FOR the Royal Court Theatre, traditionally the home of new British drama, 1993 looks like being an American year. After the Tom Wilkinson *Leir* closes in March, the actress Anna Devere Smith will be seen in her one-woman play, *Fires in the Mirror*. That is the fruit of personal research in Crown Heights, an area of Brooklyn disfigured by violence between Jews and Afro-Americans, and has been a huge success in New York itself.

Then comes *Playwright in New York*, written by Martin Crimp and the result of his experience of an exchange scheme with an American dramatist. And the summer brings what is sure to be one of the year's major events, Harold Pinter's production of David Mamet's *Oleanna*, by some accounts a scathing attack on the politically correct. No firm decisions on casting yet; but John Malkovich is a target and, if free, likely to return to London for the first time since the dreary *Slip of the Tongue*.

MORE honours have been showered on the illustrator Raymond Briggs, creator of *The Snowman* and *When the Wind Blows*. He has won the Kurt Maschler Award for *The Man*, the story of a mysterious encounter between a boy and a man. The annual award, established ten years ago, recognises books in which text and illustration are closely linked, and commemorates the 1920s partnership of Erich Kästner and Walter Trier that produced the children's classic.



Raymond Briggs: Kurt Maschler award winner for *The Man*

Emil and the Detectives. Briggs picked up a £1,000 cheque and a bronze sculpture of "Emil", sculpted by Diana Welch.

Lights up at Gate

MORE good news for the Gate. The Notting Hill theatre has just won the £18,000 first prize in the 1992 LWT Plays on Stage competition, which invests in shows on the strength of proposals from theatres. The Gate's was *Bohemian Lights* by Ramon del Valle-Inclan. Second prize went to *Show of Strength* for Fanny Burney's *A Busy Day*; third to Tron Theatre for David Kane's *Dumbstruck*.

Last chance...

NOT everything about the Royal Opera's latest revival of *Madama Butterfly* is ideal, to put it mildly, but at its centre is a truly remarkable portrayal of the title role by Yoko Watanabe, one of the leading Butterflies of the day. She combines youthfulness and frailty of appearance with a well-schooled, penetrating yet pliant voice that projects easily, and the impersonation she has worked out with the director Nuria Espert is original, consistent and inordinately moving. The final performance of the Covent Garden run is tonight at 7.30pm (071-240 1066/111).

CINEMA: David Robinson reports the discovery of Chinese treasure at the Cairo Film Festival

Signals from China picked up in Egypt

Festivals make films and films make festivals. The only international competitive event in the Middle East, Cairo has sometimes seemed, in its 16 years, to have everything but films. It is big, glamorous and hospitable, with a frantically enthusiastic local audience—but December is a bad month for pictures. The past year's crop has generally already been exhausted by precedent festivals; and producers are already saving up the best in hopes of making Berlin or Cannes.

This year, however, Cairo triumphed, with a real winner for its Golden Pyramid. Those Left Behind, shown for the first time outside China, marks at once the debut of an outstanding talent and a new spirit in Chinese cinema, and promises to be one of the major cinema discoveries of 1993.

At 29, Hu Huiyang is one of China's youngest ever debutant directors. His given name, Huiyang, which means "tree of the snow country", commemorates his family's unsettled history. His father was a theatre director until he was dispatched in 1957 to work as a labourer in the bleak Siberian far north of China. There Hu was born in 1964.

When the family was finally allowed to return to Shanghai in 1980, his father energetically resumed his theatrical activity, but died in 1989, two weeks after Tiananmen Square.

Hu was by this time studying at the Beijing Film Academy; and in 1989 his graduation film *Memory of Childhood* won the silver award in the American Student Oscar competition. As a result of this success he was allowed to make *Those Left Behind*, which deals

with the effect on family ties of a growing pattern of emigration.

The heroine is a young woman whose husband is working in San Francisco and waiting for her to join him in due time. She meets a taxi driver who is looking after his little son while his wife works in Tokyo. Both of them are anxious about the strains on their distant partners' fidelity. At the same time they are guiltily attracted to each other.

Hu's singular gift is the subtlety and clarity with which he depicts

every shift and shade of his characters' sentiments. Even in this first film, with its occasional clumsiness, his perception of the human heart recalls the great oriental intimist, the Japanese Yasujiro Ozu.

For Chinese cinema the film shows remarkable new openness, despite occasional scars of the scissors in the dialogue. This is an aspect of contemporary Red China the West has never seen before. Hu's Shanghai is not peopled with social models, but with human beings, lovable for their failings.

They move in a world of bars, nightclubs, homely apartments, hotel lobbies where foreign tourists pick up girls; they are taxi drivers, waiters, barmen, bosses, people both fascinated and frightened by the world outside China. All are depicted with tenderness, sly sweet humour and an understanding extraordinary in so young a director. The silver prize winner was another first film and another breakthrough—this time for the host country Egypt: Radwan El-Kashif's *Violets Are Blue*.

"EXCELLENT...
MAGICAL...
FIRST RATE"

"HILARIOUS,
MOVING,
MAGICAL..."

"MUCH MORE
MAGIC THAN
HOME ALONE 2"

GABRIEL BYRNE

Into The West

Where myth and magic walk the earth.

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A polymath in paradise

Roger Harrabin
on the many talents
of Ian McDonald,
whose account of a
colonial childhood
is now a BBC film

Renaissance Man is alive and well, and living in Guyana. Ian McDonald, the author of *The Hummingbird Tree*, a novel filmed for the BBC and broadcast on Sunday, is also an industrialist, a poet, a political commentator, an authority on cricket, a newspaper columnist, an environmentalist and a former world-class tennis player.

It is difficult to conceive of so accomplished a polymath in contemporary Europe. But McDonald is something of an anachronism in the West Indies, too. He seems to belong in the age of the Romantics, when life was lived at a level of passionate intensity beyond the capacity of Metropolitan Man.

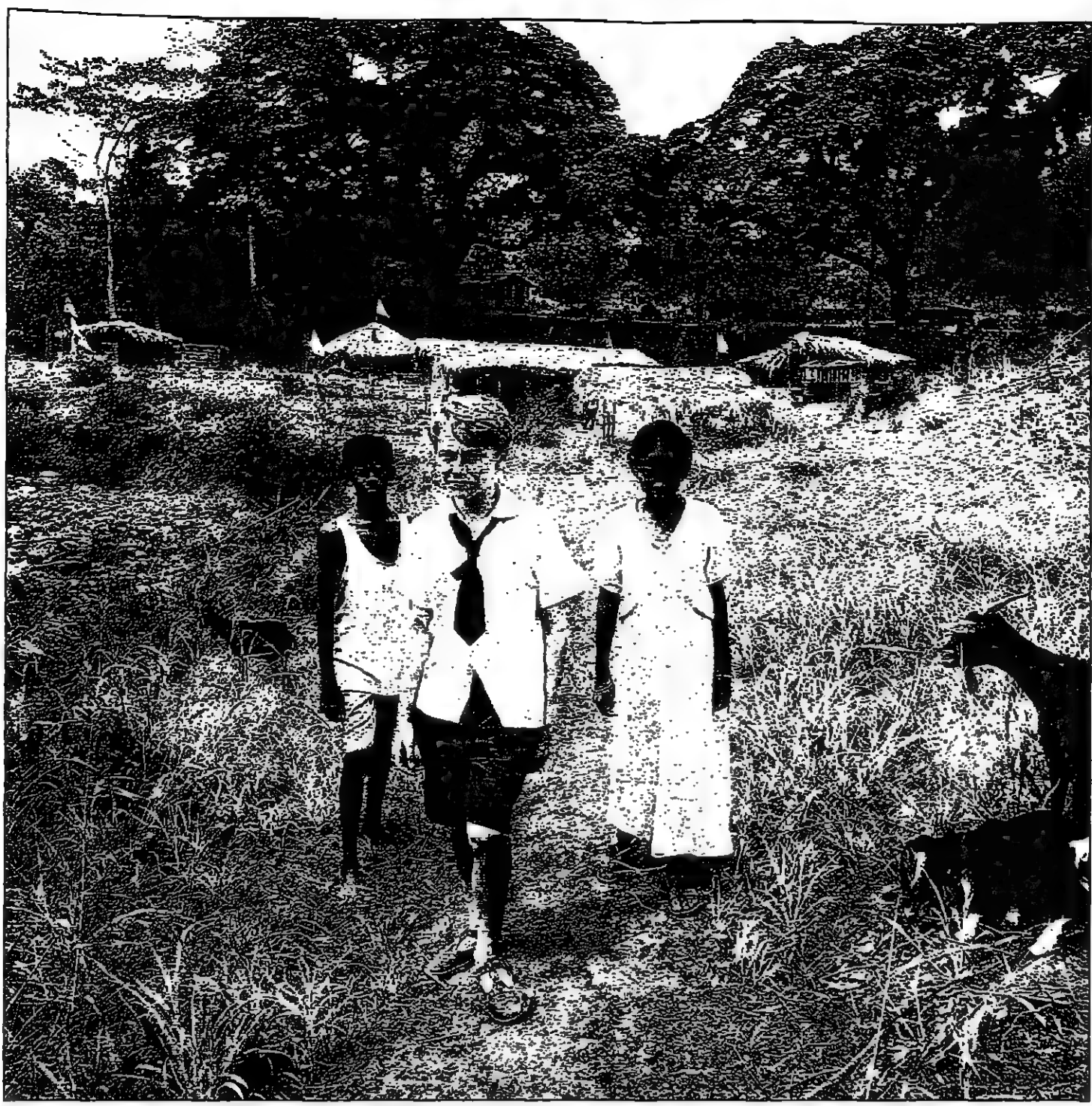
His novel, *The Hummingbird Tree*, is a semi-autobiographical account of a white boy's childhood in 1940s Trinidad. The central figure, 12-year-old Alan, grows up in a house in the country with a conservative colonial mother and a more liberal father. His chosen friends are not his peers in white society, but the Indian houseboy Kaiser, and his little sister Jallin.

Kaiser immerses Alan in the rich diversity of the Caribbean rainforest. He takes his white friend on expeditions, catching butterflies and birds. He also introduces him to the world of the Trinidadian Indian village, where superstition, poverty and brutality are blended with vibrancy, immediacy and passion in a baffling and intoxicating concoction.

But Alan's attachment to his Indian friends and the life they represent cannot last. The novel traces his painful and reluctant transition from the mystery and innocence of childhood. He is forced to choose between two seemingly irreconcilable alternatives — to remain true to Kaiser and Jallin and be outcast by white society, or to reject them and follow the traditional path to a respectable career. There is an inevitability that options will be closed.

The novelist in real life, though, escaped those strictures. McDonald has kept open his options in life, pursuing them with a vigour verging on the superhuman. He left Trinidad to study at Clare College, Cambridge, where he captained the Blues tennis team, and was a member of the boisterous sportsmen's Hawks Club. He confused his muscular fellows there by revealing his love of poetry. The tender souls in the Poetry Society were equally enthralled to have a young Adonis in their midst.

And Adonis he was. Friends relate with awe the legends of McDonald's relentless success with a large cast of beautiful young women from each of Guyana's



An attachment that cannot last: Sunil Y Ramjitsingh, Tom Beasley and Desha Penco in the BBC film of *The Hummingbird Tree*

many races (he is now married to an Indian woman). They also admired his progress elsewhere, as he toured the world as a West Indies Davis Cup player, and rose through the ranks of the sugar industry to become chairman of the West Indian sugar committee. In his spare time he was writing poems — and his novel.

His poems (published by Peterloo Press) are lyrical and vigorous in their celebration of the fierce passion of the Caribbean and its peoples. One poem, "Carib Bones", pays tribute to the ancient warrior race of Guyana, who despised pain and loved battle with an intensity that would be described nowadays as brutal. Other poems celebrate the majestic beauty of the Guyanese rainforest and warn of the dangers of environmental destruction.

One collection of poems, *Mercy Ward*, is set in a ward for the terminally ill. It is populated by

unforgettable characters such as Nurse Guyadon and the mad preacher, and it is heart-wrenching and angry, but also human, touching and very funny.

McDonald now edits a Caribbean poetry review as well as being marketing director for the Guyana Sugar Corporation, writing a weekly general interest column in an independent newspaper, commenting on cricket, playing tennis and squash, helping to bring up two young sons, and retreating regularly at weekends to a house in the unspoiled rainforest of his adopted country.

He acknowledges that his multiplicity of roles may cause a degree of envy — as well as awe — in the modern European. "I noticed in Britain that people tend to get typecast," he says. "Once you are identified as being good at something your other avenues tend

to be closed. In a small society like Guyana there are many parts to be played, especially as so many of our talented people have emigrated. People know me as an expert on sugar marketing, but they will also invite me on to a panel to discuss the work of Derek Walcott, for instance. I treasure that, and I think it is sad that it is so difficult to achieve in a society like Britain where there are so many well-qualified people to fill every niche."

McDonald wonders how his own work will be received by British television viewers. *The Hummingbird Tree* is ultimately a story of the triumph of racial and social stereotyping over childhood innocence and openness, and although McDonald does not fit the stereotype himself, neither does he despise it. "I myself have always had Indian and black friends and I am married to an Indian woman, but I can understand the motives of the older white generation who

thought that to mix races would be somehow to let down the people who had laid down admirable traditions over the years. I don't agree with it, but I can see there is something fine in that maintenance of standards."

"I also think there is something eternal in the story, too, because the tensions placed on a white boy growing up with Indian friends are similar to those placed on a poor Indian boy wanting to leave his background to go off to university. As children you can have pure and strong relationships that come up against pressures as you grow older. That causes enormous stresses in human beings."

McDonald himself appears remarkably stress-free in his well-organised life. As he approaches the age of 60 he maintains the prospect of death helps to focus his mind on what is still to be achieved.

● *The Hummingbird Tree* is broadcast on BBC 1 at 8.15pm on Sunday

CONCERT REVIEWS

Difficult journey safely completed

There have been times in the last few months when Olaf Bär seems to have been going through something of a vocal Winter Journey himself. Recent Baroque performances of orchestral songs by Mahler gave cause for concern: how would he survive the solitary hour and a half of Schubert's long, late *Winterreise* at the Wigmore Hall?

To my ears the voice has sounded tired, unable to focus and pitch itself properly, powerless to realise adequately the thoughtful interpretative intention which lay behind it. Whatever the possible reasons for this, it is good to report that Tuesday showed Bär in better voice, and taking shrewd preventive measures at possible danger points.

Where the voice seems to tire most quickly, during slow, sustained passages, Bär — with accompanist Geoffrey Parsons as stalwart support — held the tempo lightly. Where Schubert's own biting accents help to propel and concentrate the voice, as in "Rückblick" and "Der stürmische Morgen", Bär would make the most of their help.

Above all, Bär's ever-deepening insight into this song cycle provided its own powerful support. His has

never been a verbally specific, vividly word-painted *Winterreise*. Rather, he has reflected the shifting nuances of world weariness, disillusionment and resignation which track it to its end. This time there was a louder note of anger, a more determined nihilism in its foothill.

Already in the song about frozen tears, Bär seemed to be standing outside himself. This depersonalisation was continued in an almost reflective, self-communing "Die Post", preparing the listener for the particularly potent sense of numb panic which he was able to create as the crowd circled above him and thoughts and musical notes scattered like the autumn leaves.

As Bär approached the last stages of this *Winterreise*, the voice became more concentrated as the wanderer's visionary determination grew. Even in the very slow "Das Wirtshaus" there was a sense of compulsive onward movement, even as the step was dragged down. An alert imagination and tight mental focus can certainly concentrate Bär's voice impressively in the short term. One can only hope that, in the longer term, equally imaginative advice and help will be on hand.

HILARY FINCH

Batons and bows

Even in these days of historical performance practice, it is not customary for the soloist in Beethoven's Violin Concerto to direct the orchestra as well. Pinchas Zukerman, however, has long established himself both as a conductor and as a violinist, and on Tuesday night he tackled the Beethoven with the English Chamber Orchestra, with whom he launched his conducting career more than two decades ago.

So technically demanding is the concerto that any soloist has his or her hands full without having to worry about the orchestra. It was thus a tribute to Zukerman's musicianship that his performance was not only as technically accomplished as any heard for a long time, but also a good deal more expressive than most.

Zukerman, directed from the front, sometimes with one arm, occasionally with both hands — his violin precariously tucked under his chin. The ensemble never suffered: this was the new, improved ECO at its most impressive. But nor, even more remarkably, did Zukerman's playing, as notable for its impeccable intonation as for the fresh, inspirational quality of its phrasing.

The close of the first movement brought the finest moments. First came the cadenza, characteristic of the performance as a whole in its quiet authority. Then followed the final subdued delivery of the main theme, confided to the listener with almost Brahmsian introspection.



Zukerman: established as both a conductor and a soloist

The first half of the concert, in which Zukerman confined his activity to the podium, was a more mixed success. It began with a delightful account of Schubert's Overture in D ("in the Italian style") D590, the introductory Adagio beautifully moulded, the main Allegro tripping along with an aptly Rossinian gait.

But then came a dull performance of Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*, poorly shaped and fatally lacking passion. Two out of three is a reasonable score, though. And the memory of Zukerman's Beethoven will not easily be erased.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Black and white and blue all over

TELEVISION REVIEW: Tony Patrick watches the detectives in Granada's *Prime Suspect 2*

Following up any success can be murder, and Granada's *Prime Suspect 2* (ITV Tuesday last night), could hardly have been anything else. After the serial killings of the prize-winning original, the sequel grabbed the audience's attention with the discovery of the decomposed body of a young girl, buried in a back-garden in a predominantly black area of London. Adding in a local black youth who had been doubtfully convicted of killing a still-missing girl, and an imminent by-election in which the black Labour candidate was campaigning for the youth's release, Lynda La Plante and her scriptwriter Allan Cubitt had an explosive mixture.

However, not content with that, they upped the ante by making their heroine, PC DCI, Jane Tennison (Helen Mirren), fall into bed with a junior black detective, DS Robert Oswalde (Colin Salmon), thereby storing up trouble for herself when, inevitably, he was drafted into her murder squad. And there was more: suicide in custody, "exposure" in the tabloids, a deathbed confession, under-age sex and violent pornography.

Instead of the sense of dogged pursuit of a clever murderer, there was something almost hasty about how *PS2* accommodated all its

twists, most given an extra spin by race hatred.

PS1 worked because of the suspense of the plot, the gritty realism of the settings and the superlative acting. Here we revelled again in the banter and infighting of the murder squad (including Craig Fairbrass as the unconstrained bigot, DI Frank Burkitt), and the hauntingly conveyed exhaustion that such investigations visit upon Tennison, but our reactions were more relaxed: she is an old friend.

Her bloodhound-featured boss, DS Kerner (John Benfield) was never quite enough of a chauvinist foil for Tennison to be a satisfying bad guy. Replacing "Tom Bell's" terminally bitter old-timer from *PS1* as the hate-figure was DCI Thorndike (Stephen Boxer), of the internal investigation unit, MS15. He was given little with which to establish himself until late in the proceedings, but the end left no doubt as to his deviousness, and set up Mirren nicely for *Prime Suspect 3*. Salmon was superb as the cool, brave and tortured Oswalde, whose confusion as to his own identity and aims led him to a series of fatal

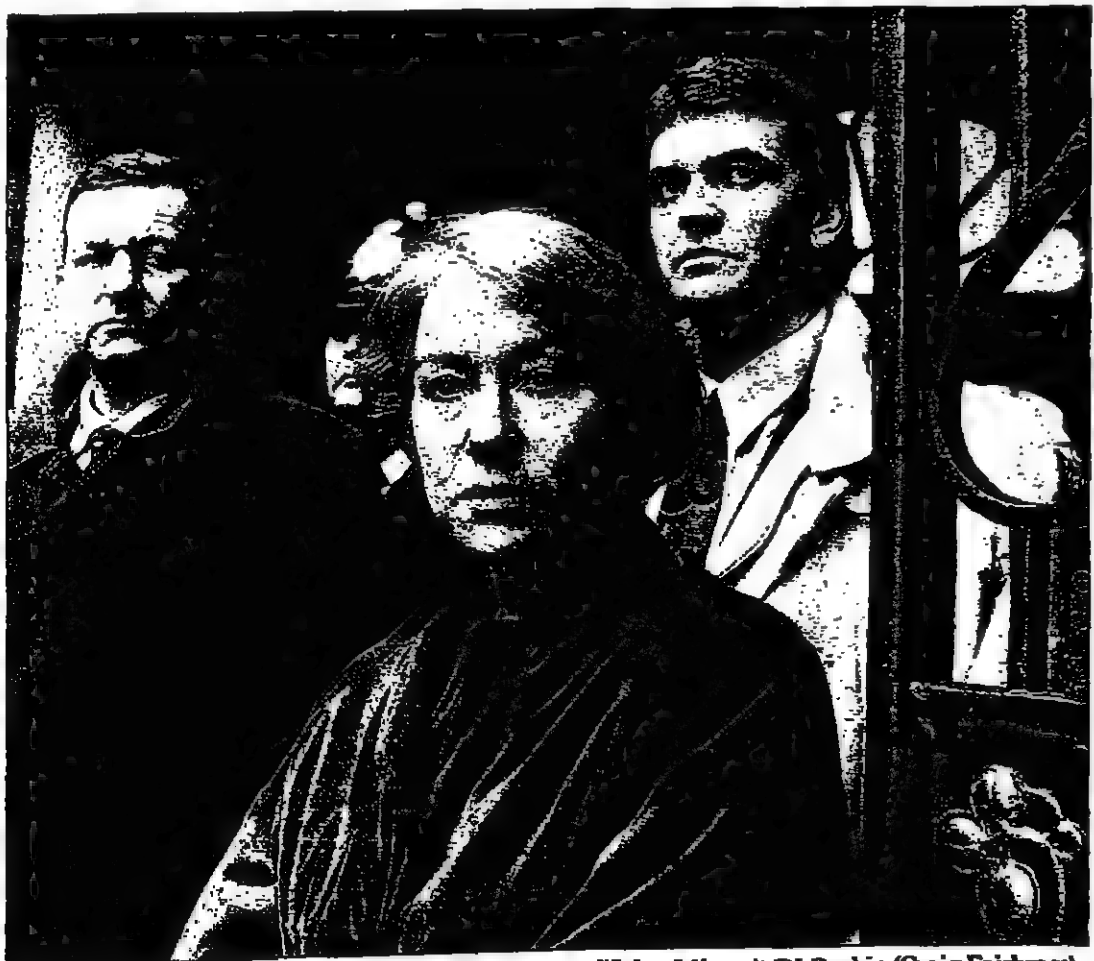
errors of judgment in dealing with his own prime suspect, Tony Allen (Fraser James, excellent). Allen's sister (Jenny Jules), mother (Claire Benedict) and father (George Harris) were also given beautifully judged performances. As David Harvey, first suspect and death-bed confessor, Tom Watson turned in a portrait of a wheezing, wasted, small-time villain that left me, like Tennison, feeling soiled by contact with him. The love-hate relationship with his embittered sister (June Watson) was perfectly drawn.

Much less convincing was the real villain, Jason (Matt Bardock). Perhaps because his identity had to be kept from us for so long, there was not sufficient force to the revelations of his vicious line in pornography. Would even such a lowlife, when aware that discovery

was close, content himself with a crude attempt at silence-by-black-mail and then indulge in abusing another under-age girl?

As to his antics with a telephone line outside the Allen house and Tennison's flat, they were simply incredible. This also applies to the way no reporters appeared to be pursuing her or Oswalde after a tabloid had printed Jason's photographs of them on her doorstep, under the only too believable headline "Top cop's dark secret".

Mirren and Salmon held the piece together with fully rounded performances: she plagued by doubts and self-blame, but terrible in her perseverance; he, similarly torn between pride in himself and distaste for what he had to do. All credit to the technical crew and director John Strickland, for this second helping of what could become an annual cause for celebration. For all its faults, it was first-class entertainment.



Success: DS Kerner (John Benfield), DCI Tennison (Helen Mirren), DI Burkitt (Craig Fairbrass)

DANCE REVIEW: John Percival on a veteran Russian rebel who is performing a new role in Paris at the age of 67

Still stepping outside the limits

Maya Plisetskaya comes to the centre of the stage, wreathes elaborate and intricate shapes with her arms, turns to either side, extends her feet in delicate nuances of elegance. Only a ballerina sure of her command over an audience could carry off such a performance. And carry it just the curtain call for her new show in Paris, a ballet version of Giraudoux's play *The Mad Woman of Chaillot*.

Plisetskaya has never accepted the normal limitations on a ballerina's life and work. At the Bolshoi Theatre she was always the rebel, one of a small group of stars who spoke up for reform. When interest-

ing roles were slow in coming, she made ballets for herself or brought in other choreographers to do so. She went abroad to work with Roland Petit and Maurice Béjart.

After defying Bolshoi politics and Soviet restrictions over the years, she has taken on a more formidable adversary — the years themselves. Not for her the ballet dancer's retirement age of 40-45. Plisetskaya reached her 67th birthday while preparing her new role, though she could easily be taken for 15 years younger.

If only this work put more demands on her formidable talent. The impression that she could do more in the way of dance steps may in fact be an illusion, achieved by the command and accuracy with which she carries out what she is given. But I am sure that she could lay on the drama a lot thicker. Coming on as *grande dame* rather than wild woman (this bag lady carries the smartest of velvet holdalls), she commands the proceedings, terrifying a mob of crooks with a glare, or with the slightest

hint of taking her furled umbrella to them.

But Gigi Casaleanu's choreography keeps her to a surprising reliance of gesture for most of the time. In fact he keeps most of the action very cool, except for one lively sequence for three other mad women who form a cabal with her. One waits for something as inventive for her, and it does not come.

Perhaps this coolness derives from Lily Denis, whose adaptation of the play leaves little visible narrative but imposes a long final

sequence of would-be poetic posturing. Nor does the score by Rodion Shchedrin, Plisetskaya's husband, help much: it only comes to life when imitating Mozart or Bach, and most of it is in a vague sub-Prokofiev harshness.

Lucky Plisetskaya herself rides blithely above all this: her calm self-assurance allows her to dominate stage and audience even with little help from the context, almost by her presence alone. The evening, conceived by Pierre Cardin and presented by him in the theatre that bears his name, becomes an act of homage by the smartest of Parisian audiences to an artist defying and transcending time.

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Nothing to lose but chagrin

Is Constable guilty of a fearful gub? (Gub: Conor Cruise O'Brien's acronym for Charlie Haughey's characterisation of mishaps, "grotesque, unbelievable, bizarre and unacceptable" which disfigured his administrations.) Did Constable issue recently two books utterly different but with the same cover, author, price and title? You might think so. One was reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* by Gerald Kaufman, who found the book worthless. The other book landed up with John Vincent, benign professor of history at Bristol, who pronounced it "sharply argued, richly informed, judicious yet spicy", and certain long to "inspire lively debate".

Two books? Or, more likely, one, seen through two startlingly different pairs of spectacles and assessed by two intellects powerful yet partisan? If so, Dr Cosgrave has good reason to be disappointed at least by Mr Kaufman. Why? First, because Kaufman is no unlearned pig, from whom only grunts could be expected. Secondly, because Cosgrave has taken elaborate pains to be scrupulously fair.

Vincent accuses Cosgrave of writing straightforward and useful political history, and so he does. Like me, you will probably learn much and be reminded of more by his pages, and find much there conveniently confirmed or denied. He also accuses him of inspiring lively debate. Maybe: I'm not so sure. He inspires rather in me

Labour leaders may write off socialism but Colin Welch believes that the ideology will revive itself in the activism of busybodies

THE STRANGE DEATH OF SOCIALIST BRITAIN
Post-War British Politics
By Patrick Cosgrave
Constable, £16.95

THE ESSENTIAL ANATOMY OF BRITAIN
Democracy and Crisis
By Anthony Sampson
Hodder & Stoughton, £9.99

acquiescence, a confidence in his judgment natural and welcome in those who share his sensible and moderate views, a confidence more reluctant and rueful in the socialists caught up in the strange death he chronicles. He is too fond of such self-deprecatory phrases as "in my judgment". Unless otherwise specified, who else's judgment could it possibly be?

Vincent also calls Cosgrave "spicy". The spice is mild indeed, like curry at a prep school: no chilli, little scandal. He treats the motives of those he disagrees with, like the two Harolds and Heath, with invariable respect and friendly insight. His journalistic mentor, he tells us, was George Hutchinson, once Macmillan's courteous, helpful and truthful press officer. A fine example, well followed here.

As for "lively debate": this may among the cognoscenti centre on Cosgrave's shrewdly amiable character sketches, on his Tadpole and Taper aspects, on his assessments, of who was or was not during some crisis ill or soon fit, tired or despairing, fired by or lacking essential ambition — not perhaps over-lively. More fruitfully, debate may centre on the theme suggested by the book's title, which is adapted from George Dangerfield's *Strange Death of Liberal England*. This ambiguous masterpiece of

motives irony has beguiled many and allegedly inspired (it is not obvious) Cosgrave. Dangerfield ignored, so far as I recollect, the extent to which the Liberalism whose death he chronicled had already ceased to be in any precise sense "liberal" — I use capitals and lower case to distinguish between the party and the philosophy. He also failed to note how liberalism did not all die but moved houses, finding new homes in the Tory party, in part of Mrs Thatcher's capacious bosom, even tenuously in Labour's basement.

It raises questions. Is socialist Britain truly dead? I wouldn't bet on it. At appropriate moments Cosgrave pops in dramatic references to Labour's mortal illnesses, to its death-throes, to the presumed inability of the natural party of government (as Wilson dubbed it) to

ever to form again a government at all. Cosgrave's final sentence is a hilariously wild quotation from Neil Kinnock: "Socialism of course is dead and gone: finished, passed, out of the window. Nobody believes in it any more. Nobody. Not in this country, not abroad. It is now a museum piece, nothing more. Time has passed it by." So that's that — or is it? Whoever before quoted Mr Kinnock as a profound political analyst?

The death of socialism, as of conservatism, has indeed often been pronounced or predicted. Yet the sentiments and social conditions which nourished it are, like the poor, always with us: poverty itself, relative if not absolute; inequality and the envious resentment it engenders; greed for power; a vast and influential public sector; a conviction that state action alone can prevent or cure all the ills that flesh is heir to.

So long as these sentiments and conditions flourish, socialism is never dead. It may have to find new homes, new rhetoric: it may have to change its name, its means if not its end. But it will still be alive, hoping to profit from Tory mistakes, not at present rare or trivial, though Labour is ill-placed to exploit them.

Cosgrave's book is narrowly political. Those dissatisfied with such an approach will turn with relief to

Anthony Sampson, whose *Essential Anatomy* is like previous *Anatomies*, briskly all-embracing. All human or at least bureaucratic life is there, except oddly enough for the arts. Like previous *Anatomies* this one points to serious anatomical deformities "which require urgent attention, and which can only be put right by much greater public protest and involvement — which are not yet much in evidence". Sampson cites Rousseau, I fancy with agreement and regret, to the effect that only at election times do British electors wield any power to achieve change.

Shrewd socialists may discern here — indeed, have discerned — vast new fields for their feverish activities. Perpetual change, continuous and restless public involvement, widespread or universal protest, the ideal society of articulate busybodies, of whom Sampson is one. For them, freedom is found only in perpetual "participation". In a sort of continuous election. Those who prefer to cultivate their own gardens will find themselves disfranchised, perhaps deprived of the freedom and leisure to dig. They may thus think Cosgrave's narrow politics less oppressive.

I have not been wholly fair, I admit, to Sampson's book, which is easy to read and well worth reading. If its author is indeed, as Alan Clark recently suggested to Valerie Grove in this paper, "the archdeacon of the wanking classes", he certainly fills that high office with conscientious zeal.

Hard-boiled man of letters

Michael Wright

THE ART OF FICTION
By David Lodge
Secker & Warburg, £14.99

There is a scene in the film *Cool Hand Luke* when the hero, played by Paul Newman, attempts to eat 50 boiled eggs for a bet. Somehow he pulls off the feat, despite ending bloated and dizzy to the point of unconsciousness. I have just finished reading the 50 sections of David Lodge's *The Art of Fiction*, and am fast developing all the symptoms of flu. Self-pity aside, the causal connection seems obvious. Consume 50 of anything too fast and, be they boiled eggs or potted lit-criticisms, you get sick.

To be fair, Lodge prefaces the offending tome with a health warning: "This is a book for people who prefer to take their Lit Crit in small doses, a book to browse in, and dip into." And the work started life as a series of articles in the *Independent on Sunday* to be spread barmlessly over a half-ton of leisurely egg-and-bacon sessions between 1991 and 1992. Each section consists of a printed gobble of classic or modern fiction (campus novels preferred) followed by a tinkling meditation on the passage loosely related to a theme such as metafiction, narrative structure, or coincidence. There are plenty of gliding insights, yet a whiff of breakfast journalism still hangs over the work like the smell of burnt toast. And three specific flaws emerge.

First, Lodge's tendency towards the egotistical sublime (a phrase used by Keats to describe the work of the poet-bore Wordsworth) is really very painful. The man will keep booming away about himself. This becomes most offensive when Lodge is demonstrating analogies between his writing and that of James Joyce or T. S. Eliot, heavily emphasising the correspondences of his own post-modern piddling-prankings to *Ulysses* or *The Waste Land* in an apparent attempt to bask in their reflected glory. Besides Lodge's familiar Jakobsonian droning about metaphor/metonymy, "inter-textuality" — the referring of one text to another or others — emerges as one of the author's pet devices and desires.

It is unfortunate that the juiciest article has been cut. The piece viciously accused a hapless Mills & Boon writer of plagiarising *Nice Work*, and recently forced a red-faced Lodge to make an out-of-court settlement and apologise publicly. All very foolish. In another section, on Nabokov and "Fancy Prose", Lodge declares that "the golden rule of fictional prose is that there are no rules". But it seems that, for him at such freedom does not stretch to the writers of Mills & Boon, however flattering their inter-textuality.

Secondly, Lodge constantly over-emphasises the old-fashioned dichotomy between writer and reader, rather than admitting both as directly involved in the process of "creating" a text. Thus "Symmetry, I believe, matters more to writers of fiction than readers consciously perceive." That kind of half-baked assertion is especially ironic when Lodge, the man — as writer and reader, novelist and critic — is himself a cypher for the indivisibility of the two processes. Elsewhere, he patronisingly observes: "Perhaps titles always mean more to authors than readers, who, as every writer knows, frequently forget or garble the names of books they claim to admire." Is Lodge then making one of his thigh-slapping literary jokes when elsewhere he refers to Márquez's famous novel as *One Hundred Days of Solitude*? Or is he unconsciously undermining the very dichotomy that he has been attempting to reinforce?

Sadly, Lodge seems unwilling to take risks: to take the driver out of the bag and go for the big hit. His short, taut analyses never amount to more than meagre clumps of sketched observation, with little or no attempt to synthesise his findings into confident conclusions. So, for example, a promising examination of the significance of proper names in fiction falls off in a limp discussion of the arbitrariness of language reflected in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*; a cursory flirt through the props cupboard of magic realism nosedives into a celebration of the cinematic quality of a scene from Milan Kundera; and a piece on "Sense of Place" turns out not to be about sense of place at all, but a paean to Martin Amis's gift for characterisation.

The Art of Fiction is plucky and put lit crit played over 50 holes, and "holes" (or, if we are being seriously post-structuralist, "aporia") is the operative word. It is what is left out rather than what is included that leaves the most potent impression. The books drips with the sense of an opportunity missed, and the gap between what is and what might have been hangs like a cloud over the text. Passing around a tray with 50 empty *voilà-vent* cases at a cocktail party is far worse than not serving any canapés at all. Give me a boiled egg any day.

Transient glimpses of a master of English music

Simon Heffer

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
A Life in Photographs
By Jerrold Northrop Moore
OUP, £25

It would be a mistake to buy this book under the impression that it is packed just with photographs of the composer. Many of the pages are sepia backgrounds of Victorian, Edwardian or Georgian images upon which pictures of Vaughan Williams, or those associated with him, are pasted. It is a little like having a Vaughan Williams theme park in your armchair.

The book does tell the story of the composer's life simply and accurately, and will be a perfect adjunct to the heavier works on RVW for those enthusiasts wishing to have a visual record of his 86 years. It would also make an admirable introduction for a younger reader. If the captions are occasionally arch ("Ralph remembered his first sight of the grey and golden buildings rising beyond the salt marshes, the

sleep streets, the mazes of halls and chapels with a ghost of incense seeming to linger in the darkness..."), that is forgivable.

The very publication of the book reflects the growing interest in RVW's music in the last decade, the rush by great conductors to record it, and the acknowledgement by critics that RVW is a towering rather than a middling composer.

Books such as this encourage more people to go on the civilising voyage of discovery through the nine symphonies, the choral works,

the operas and concerti. Sadly, Vaughan Williams did not have the foresight to ensure that he posed regularly for such photographers as would have made this book truly impressive. There is a little too much of the family album about it, and it hardly justifies a £25 price tag. The quality of some reproductions is poor.

But there are some splendid snaps to be found that bring out the physical might and spiritual charm of RVW, both of which qualities can be detected in the scale and warmth of his music. Not least among them is the avuncular picture of him and his cat, which seems to sum up how very ordinary an Englishman this extraordinary man was.

Simon Heffer is deputy editor of *The Spectator*



Anton Dolin as Satan in Vaughan Williams's ballet Job (1931)

The last chapter of our selection of Christmas books: from the clash of battles great and glorious, and the splash of prints of every kind and colour...

The vigour with which defence publishers peddle their wares (not to say wars) during Advent sums up the declining world market in peace and goodwill. Most of the bestsellers this year are, mercifully, old ones.

With *Eagles to Glory* by John H. Gill (Greenhill, £30), describes Napoleon's 1809 campaign, culminating in his victory over the Austrians at Wagram. The author, a US army major, concentrates on the role of the emperor's German troops. By this time in the Napoleonic Wars, barely half of his *grande armée* were ethnic Frenchmen. The others were largely drawn from central Germany whose states, squeezed between Austria and Prussia, had turned to Bonaparte for their protection.

Their performance in the field varied considerably. Those who were good were very, very good, while those who were not soundly horrid. The emperor never liked to admit that any Germans were the equal of his own blue-coats. Wagram left him looking impregnable in Europe and his German allies shared the glory of serving beneath the imperial eagle.

But the nationalism which had inspired his cause was being discredited by these soldiers, later to sprout elsewhere and turn against him. This is hardly a broad brush approach to military history, but Major Gill's meticulous research, illustrated with 50 maps, has been turned into a well-sustained narrative.

Napoleon once said: "For the sake of history I should have died at Waterloo..." Au contraire, according to Somerset de Chair, editor of *Napoleon on Napoleon* (Cassell, £20). By keeping him alive on St Helena, the British did historians a service. With 50 servants, the emperor had little to do but write his memoirs, dictating to his entourage of generals and his wives.

Whether he made the best use of his time there is debatable. If *Napoleon on Napoleon* is anything to go by, his output was less than outstanding. Still, Somerset de Chair has made the most of it. This autobiographical edition has been attractively packaged with lots of photographs and does contain some fascinating insights. Napo-

MILITARY Henry Stanhope

leon clearly thought Waterloo an even damned nearer run thing than did Wellington. The Iron Duke did everything wrong and his men should have been swept from the field, but were saved by a storm and the blundering French marshals. But the British infantry come in for praise.

Robin Neillands's *The Wars of the Roses* (Cassell, £15.99) is an accessible, compact account of the vicious fighting which diverted England for some 30 years in the 15th century. This began amid deep national discontent after the British had been beaten by the French at the battle of Castillon. Our school-children learn of Poitiers, Crécy and Agincourt, but Castillon is rarely mentioned.

The origins are more deeply buried, in the overthrow of Richard II by Henry Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke, who became Henry IV, was the son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and third son of Edward III. Yorkist descendants of Edward's second son considered their claim more legitimate. Henry IV and V were strong enough to resist them; Henry VI after Castillon was not. Readers might at times long for a computer. But that is the fault of the Plantagenets, not Neillands, and it is a good winter's tale.

So is Robert Hardy's *Longbow* (Patrick Stephens, £20). The actor, better known for playing Churchill and a Yorkshire vet on television, is also an authoritative toxophile. A trustee of the Royal Armouries, he advised on the weapons found on the *May Rose*. A chapter about Henry VIII's flagship is among the new features in this third edition of Hardy's book, first published in 1976.

A brief word on the Guinness Three: *The Guinness Book of Decisive Battles* by Geoffrey Regan (Guinness £17.95); *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Weapons* by Ian Hogg (Guinness £19.95); *The Guinness Book of Military Anecdotes* by Geoffrey Regan (Guinness £14.99). *Decisive Battles* contains 50 of these, thoughtfully selected, well illustrated and described, and could fuel a cross-turkey debate. *Weapons* is comprehensive, informative and nicely designed, though it seems more of an illustrated history than an encyclopaedia. *The Book of Military Anecdotes* is rather like a bag of dolly mixtures — tempting to dip into but unsatisfying.



Through two lenses, darkly: Philip Glass (left) by Karsh — an important personage — and (right), with Robert Wilson, by Mapplethorpe — an image of conflict

PHOTOGRAPHY Marie-Louise Avery

It is clear from these books that photography is not merely an art, but may be regarded as coming closer to the original creative impulse than any other. Instead of having to work through a recalcitrant medium like paint or clay or stone, the imagination has in photographic technology a means of expression which is immediate, and increasingly responsive. As Robert Mapplethorpe, Mary Ellen Mark, Yousuf Karsh, et al demonstrate in their different ways, what the camera records is the mind behind it rather than the scene in front of it.

The most telling illustration comes from comparing the portraits of the composer Philip Glass, taken by Karsh and Mapplethorpe and reproduced in, respectively, *Karsh: American Legends* (Little, Brown, £22.50) and *Mapplethorpe* (Jonathan Cape, £60). To Karsh he appears as an important personage with calm and serious face cupped in sensitive hand seen against a musical score; Mapplethorpe's picture is one of conflict, from the entwined fingers, twisted

arms and crossed legs to the expression — furrowed and impatient. One is poster photography, showing public image without a hint of a private being within — the epitome of *art pompier* — while the other catches a character through his outward appearance with wit and sensitivity.

It was Mapplethorpe's artistry that brought down the lightning strike of notoriety after his death from AIDS in 1989. A publicly funded exhibition including his pictures of sado-masochistic homosexuality was denounced as pornography and cancelled. This retrospective album shows both why he deserved an exhibition, and why his critics felt it should be cancelled. His portraits are beautiful, strikingly composed with an empathy which brings the viewer within tactile distance of the subject.

On the other hand, I find his fetishistic pictures of tortured penises, violated anuses and leather contorted faces totally alienating. It is, however, evident that he himself was powerfully attracted by the menace and the pain and although he cannot convey that attraction to me, he creates an unmistakable sense of its power. In making that connection, he achieves even here the artist's aim, to enlighten the understanding of his or her audience.

The margins of society are where Mary Ellen Mark also operates, and she too can make one feel that nothing human is alien. Her portraits of the "unfamous", collected in *Mary Ellen Mark* 25 years, edited by Marianne Fulton (Little, Brown, £22.50), lead into places where most people would probably not otherwise go, to see things usually unseen in comfortable daily lives. Mark's use of short lenses and acute angles brings her subjects startlingly close and in our face to face confrontations with them we perhaps understand more of their condition.

Diane Arbus also used wide lenses and the flexibility of black and white photography in natural light to make her images immediate, but Diane Arbus: *Magazine Work*, edited by Doon Arbus and Marvin Israel (Bloomsbury £16.99), gives some sense of the constraints and stimulus of working to a brief.

She managed the telling of the given story with such truthfulness to her own vision that browsing through the book we can perceive her particular style in subjects as diverse as her close-up portrait of Germaine Greer, her studies of poverty in South Carolina or even her children's fashion shots for *Harper's Bazaar*. Coolly we gaze her subject in the eye, observing, not meeting.

A collection unapologetically concerned with outward forms is *Dancers* (Little, Brown, £49.50). These photographs by Philip Trager celebrate the human form in the self-conscious postures of the dance. Trager has brought his background as a photographer of buildings to his subject to create

"photographs of dancers in a landscape" and the combination of energy and stillness generates images of great beauty and excitement.

By far my favourite among these books is *On the Edge: Images from 100 Years of Vogue* (Ebury Press, £30). Because fashion is *Vogue's* life blood, and because there is no more sensitive barometer of social values than the ephemera of fashion — in faces and postures as much as in clothes — this collection of photographs by the likes of Irving Penn, Richard Avedon and Bruce Weber is a superb history of 20th-century Western society.

But above all — in the way that Erwin Blumenfeld, for example, photographs an ostrich-feathered hat or Irving Penn sees Colette in wrinkled old age — it represents a triumph of the artist's eye.

In this Saturday's Review: Norman Stone on George Orwell; and Victoria Glendinning on fairy-tales

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Living a despair of one's own

Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf? Caroline Moorehead thinks biographers should be

In 1911 Virginia Woolf wrote to her sister Vanessa: "I could not write, and all the devils came out — hairy black ones. To be 29 and unmarried — to be a failure — childless — insane too, no writer." While other biographers have attributed her madness to the tensions of writing, Peter Alexander lays the blame for Leonard Woolf who, despite the conflicting verdicts of five separate specialists, decreed that she should have no children. The fury with which she wrote, he believes, became a substitute, and the resulting tensions pushed her into madness. Nor was his decision. Alexander suggests, a wholly altruistic one: Leonard Woolf considered a baby "much less attractive and more savage than a puppy, kitten or leopard". It is easy to see this as a remark made in jest; here it is taken at face value.

Alexander's black-and-white view of the causes of Virginia Woolf's breakdowns is not his only area of certainty. From the opening page of his biography, he is quick to state his position. While the Woolfs have been admired by many people, Alexander is not among their fans. Not only does he consider Virginia Woolf's writing greatly overrated; so, he maintains, is the rest of Bloomsbury, not one of whose members was ever of the first importance. What was more, to link these people together is foolish, because they neither shared the same views, nor liked one another. His is what he calls an "anti-Bloomsbury" portrait, intended to restore the "perception of Leonard and Virginia Woolf to a more realistic level" and to chart their influence over one another.

Reality, for Alexander, is that Virginia was anti-Semitic, tactless to the point of cruelty, elitist and

reactionary, and so insecure that she "seemed always to be looking over her shoulder to see if Clive and Vanessa would scorn the shade of green she had chosen for her living room". Leonard was tough, intolerant and cowardly, lying his way into a pacifist's exemption in the first world war, in order not to "die in the trenches". Even his dog is "capable of killing almost anything smaller than himself".

Furthermore, their apparently close relationship is suspect, for while he married her for her social standing and money, she turned to him because she was desperate to marry, despite finding his family boring and vulgar, and his "Jewish voice and Jewish laugh" unappealing. Early in his introduction, Alexander explains that as a biographer, he follows the words of A. O. J. Cockshut: "Books

written by authors who were uncertain of what they really think of their subject, or afraid to say, are quickly forgotten." You could add that biographies written out of malice or dislike make uneasy reading.

Alexander is, however, a lively writer and his portraits of both Leonard and Virginia, if often unduly harsh, are provoking. There is a first glimpse of the young Virginia, with her caustic wit and longing for fun, laid low by losing her mother, her half sister, and then her much loved brother Thoby, blows she once described as from "an enemy hidden behind the cotton wool of daily life". Leonard, as a young man, is seen as out of sorts with his family, losing his faith at Cambridge and finding G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* to put in its place, and seeing himself as "cleanser of Aegaeon stables".

When these two anxious people — both revolted by sex — come together, Alexander lades out his



Sir Leslie Stephen and his daughter Virginia, taken just before his death in 1904, which led shortly afterwards to her first serious breakdown

distaste impartially. Leonard, he claims, was quite right to abandon fiction, which he was no good at, while Virginia's novels contain scenes that become "vaporous" with details so laboured that they take on a "nightmarish intensity". Reality in fiction is crucial. "All aesthetic judgments, all use of the imagination, are dependent on a secure grounding in reality." Virginia was no cook, so is thus not entitled to dwell on a dish of sole and cream; no seamstress, so should not consider a heroine feeling peaceful as she stitches.

Where evidence is lacking, Alexander turns to conjecture. Virginia "must have" been revolted by Strachey's erotic poems and "taken aback" by the variety of his sexual partners. His determination to defate weakness an otherwise interesting portrait of a marriage.

And yet, after a hundred sharp

pages, Alexander mellow. The closing years of the Woolf's life together is told almost with affection. Possibly the most interesting passages in the book are those dealing with Virginia's writing, all day, every day, either at her desk or in her mind, reciting out loud dialogue that troubled her. Leonard once calculated that on an average day she slept eight hours and worked ten to twelve. What started out as a rebuke ends with a tribute. Virginia was not a great novelist, but she was, Alexander concedes, a great artist, who gave women a voice, and wrote a diary full of "brilliant little sketches capturing life as it flew by". This was "one of the most remarkable marriages in the history of English literary partnerships".

No one was a tougher critic of herself than Virginia Woolf, and no one described her terrors and

failings with more innuendo. As one of her heroines put it: "She had a perpetual sense of being out, out, far out to sea and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day." It is with pleasure that a reader turns to Frances Spalding's *Paper Darts*, an edited and annotated collection of Virginia Woolf's letters, illustrated with paintings, photographs and woodcuts of Bloomsbury, by Bloomsbury — Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell and others — among them an arresting photograph of Virginia with her father, two sorrowful and wary profiles.

If some find Virginia Woolf's fiction difficult, few quarrel with the opinion that her diary and letters are exceptional. It was the letters she wrote to family and friends — about 4,000 survive — that best display her singular talent for pinning down the fleeting confu-

sions of life, its disasters and imperfections, and her exceptional eye for the revealing details in people's characters. Virginia Woolf set great store by letters: they should be a "film of wax pressed close to the graving in the mind".

In this selection, she comes across as affectionate and curious, even if, on occasion, brutal, as with her description of Ottoline Morrell as a "ship with its sails rat-eaten, and its masts mouldy, and green sea serpents on the decks". While Alexander's book is a look at the dark underside of Bloomsbury life, Frances Spalding restores the essential humour of both Woolfs, as well as the lightness of their touch.

To the Lighthouse, edited by Susan Dick, the latest volume in the *Shakespeare Head Edition of Virginia Woolf's works*, has just been published by Blackwell at £35.

Children in search of truth

Frances Hill

ARMS AND THE GIRL
By Stevie Davies
Women's Press, £11.99/£5.99pbk

January Cahill, in *Arms and the Girl*, was named for the month she was born in. All too aptly, since she is fated to live in the coldness and harshness of the lowest level of an underclass family. Physically abused by her father from the age of three, unloved by anyone but her ineffectual sister Prue, she lives by a creed of absolute cynicism. She hates, she destroys. But she has an independence, determination and strength that make her more than a victim. This character bears the symbolic weight Stevie Davies gives it by linking January with Jesus Christ.

Arms and the Girl is Stevie Davies's third novel. Her greatest strength — besides powerful writing, fine character drawing and splendid story-telling — is honesty. The Cahill family is anatomised with a brilliance of detail and unflinching recognition of horror that gives it utter conviction.

It is because January is the neediest child, looked after as a baby by the narcissistic eldest son, that she is singled out by the loutish NCO father to bear the brunt of his rage. He sees in her the unloved, unlovable child he hates in himself. His character is masterly in its sporadic charm, self-pity, weakness, loneliness and evil.

Living close to the Cahills in the remote Scottish village they are posted to when the narrative begins, in the late 1950s, are the Gordons: a Church of Scotland rector, his highly intelligent, conscientious wife and similar daughter. The Protestant 13-year-old Isabel befriends the Catholic Prue Cahill, whose instinctive response to deprivation is to try to escape into another identity, that of an intellectually aspiring Scot. She would ideally like to be Isabel.

But Isabel has the emotional security bequeathed by her upbringing to follow the search for knowledge to painful truth. She dares to question Britain's right to rule in those countries the army families have been posted to; she dares to tell her Calvinistic father she does not believe in God. Prue resorts, as life at home descends into hell, to seeing visions of the Virgin Mary. Her love of books becomes a mere search for solace.

Throughout this novel Stevie Davies demonstrates the symbiotic relationship of evil and the denial of truth and reality. Hugh Cahill finds dangerous comfort in his church's offering of forgiveness through self-deceiving confession. Mary Cahill does infinite damage by blinding herself to his sexual abuse of their children. Even the well-meaning doctor who treats Mrs Gordon for cancer harms her by dishonest reassurance.

January and Isabel are the truth-seekers. One is destroyed by her inability to blind herself so as to avoid intolerable pain; the other, born luckier, achieves an existence of purpose and integrity. Both, equally, are heroines.

Bulwarks to boulevards

Peter Mandler

THE CITY ASSEMBLED
The Elements of Urban Form Through History
By Spiro Kostof
Thames & Hudson, £28

sweeping generalisation. We see the parts shifting shape over time without often glimpsing the whole. Take boundaries, for instance. Medieval city walls almost everywhere give way to urban expansion. Physically, they are dismantled, yet the boundaries they



View from the author's window, taken from *Town and Country*, a new volume of essays by Mark Girouard (Yale, £25)

Cities really are like bodies, but not in the way we used to imagine. A naive understanding of evolution assumed that bodies adapted directly to changes in the environment, and an equally naive understanding of cities read changes in urban form as more-or-less direct responses to changes in function — skyscrapers spring up when cities reach a certain level of commercial intensity. In our post-modern world, we are no longer so confident that form follows function, either in bodies or in cities.

Instead, we are increasingly attentive to history. The patterns of the past impose lasting constraints on the present and future development features of the past are not erased when their purposes pass, and new features must accommodate old ones in order to serve new functions. High-rise business districts emerged in America, where other factors encouraged merchants to concentrate centrally, but not in history-laden Europe.

No scholar of urbanism was more sensitive to the presence of the past than Spiro Kostof, the professor of architectural history at Berkeley, whose career was sadly abbreviated last year by a fatal cancer. He was just able, in his waning months, to complete the second of two great volumes on the evolution of urban form that will serve as his monument. The first, *The City Shaped*, covered urban morphology, the distinctive patterns that recur in cities across the ages and the continents: grids, diagrams and "grand manner" designs. Now, in *The City Assembled*, he has tackled urban anatomy, the body-parts out of which all these patterns are made: centres and peripheries, walls and gates, parks and squares.

In both volumes, an immense variety of shapes and forms are collected from cities in all parts of the globe and all stages of civilisation: they are patiently sorted, sifted, classified and compared. In taking this approach it is terribly difficult to keep history in the picture: how can you avoid idealising the forms, lifting them from their unique social and political contexts which (the historian believes) alone give them meaning? It is like dismantling a jigsaw puzzle and then reconstructing it in the mind's eye, one piece at a time.

In *The City Assembled*, Kostof turns the trick by giving us a series of micro-histories and avoiding

marked do not disappear. In their place stands a new kind of grid: a ring-road, perhaps, or a public promenade. *Bulwarks* metamorphose into boulevards.

Similarly with public buildings: functions change, but the form is harder to shift. The *palais royal* may be levelled by revolution, but on the same site the *palais de justice* rises. The bishop's palace is secularised as the town hall (or, in medieval Italy, vice versa, as the bishops laid claim to relics of the Roman state). The Louvre and the Kremlin — or, for that matter, the Palace of Westminster — survive successive changes of regime. In some Iberian cities, the Roman forum is appropriated first for a Visigothic basilica, then for the court of a mosque, then for a Christian *plaza* or little square. Again, etymology is telling: "Dar Khoura", the court of the *khan* at Aleppo, echoes the name of the Hellenistic *agora* it occupied.

As the above examples indicate, it is not possible for Kostof to tell all the histories of all the parts of the world's cities. *The City Assembled*

Baroque planners are forgiven because on the whole they left old centres intact. Things started to go wrong with Napoleon.

But Kostof is not a dogmatic anti-planner. He praises the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, cut through Rome in the 1880s, for achieving novel effects while respecting existing roads and squares. He has warm words for designers like Rob and Leon Krier who want to plan with rather than against the grain of the traditional city. What terrifies him is the vision of the city stripped of urbanity, a city where millions of people live separate lives.

Whenever this modern city rears its head, Kostof tends to shy away. He cannot accept that the modern city could be part of "urban truth." A defect in Kostof's history, this was surely a strength in the man. Others would do well to attend to the lessons — even those enforced with special pleading — contained in this wise and beautiful book.

Peter Mandler is a senior lecturer in history at London Guildhall University

... to companions on country walks and guides to salerooms

There is something unsavoury about antique price guides. They give new resonance to Oscar Wilde's maxim about the cynic who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. Yet with the antique market in recession, these books are booming, packed with their often fuzzy postage-stamp-sized photographs and salacious information on what they fetched. Presumably the publishers hope that the public, restrained by lack of cash, will comfort themselves with some arm-chair shopping.

First comes the *The Lyle Official Review: Antiques Price Guide* 1993 by Tony Curtis (Lyle Publications, £16.95). Five years ago his introduction was a breathless frolic through endless categories on the up and up. Now the text is more subdued, as Curtis breaks the news to us that categories such as erotica have been badly hit, while early English pottery is "very cautious" because of a scandal concerning fakes. Tony, however, is happy enough with a Lovejoy-like discov-

ANTIQUES
Sarah Jane Checkland

ery: "two of the oldest pieces of golfing equipment in existence". One, of a match at the Murrayfield Golf Club in 1904, he sold back to the club for a cool £11,000.

More informative is the *Miller's Antiques Price Guide* edited by Judith and Martin Miller (Miller's Publications, £19.99), which supplies more detailed assessments of given markets, while occasional panels explain what esoteric items such as Posset pots actually are.

Both guides run to 800 pages. A spot check on stands with open shelves revealed more examples in Miller's but higher prices in Lyles, although both use well-known auction houses as their source.

Lyle also produces a *Paintings Price Guide* (£16.95), while Miller's have a *Picture Price Guide* (£19.99) on the same lines.

Such guides fail to point out that

if you cannot find a buyer, you cannot sell. Better, perhaps, is the 170-page *Which? Guide to Buying Antiques* (Hodder & Stoughton, £12.99), which states that collecting is about "buying things to enjoy, with the added comfort that they are likely to benefit your pocket in the long run".

As well as useful tips on buying from dealers as opposed to auctioneers and chapters on how furniture is made, the book sensibly provides a range of prices for a given category of object.

For my money I prefer the pocket-sized *Antiques Fact Files* (Miller's, £8.99), which are full of expertise on a specific category such as furniture or art nouveau. In *Dolls and Teddy Bears*, a title just published, you can ask these questions of your subject: "Does it have a roguish facial expression? Is the mouth closed, perhaps in a 'watermelon smile'? If the answer is yes, you have a Googly-eyed doll invented by the American illustrator Grace Gebbie Drayton around 1910, and you can rejoice.

It now has the added flavour of nostalgia, since not much of the rural life depicted still survives. This welcome reissue (White Lion Books, £14.95) after 42 years contains the fine wood engravings by Barbara Greg which graced the original but were dropped later.

Geoffrey Young's *Watching Wildlife* (George Philip, £14.99) is equally learned, but instead of poetry and dry humour it offers brisk information: a guide to the principal kinds of habitat in Great Britain — woodland, moorland and so on — and the animal and plant life to be found there. A useful comparison for people who like exploring the countryside, and there are stylish illustrations by Elaine Franks. The same artist has illustrated *West Country Wildlife*, in which Kevin Boot offered a naturalist's reflections through the seasons. John F. Burton does the same in *Downland Wildlife*. These are books (both published by George Philip at £16.99) to be read by the fire rather than to carry on expeditions, but they list nature reserves and areas of interest.

Endangered Birds (Philip, £19.99) tells us there are 9,000 species of bird in the world and the long-term survival of more than 1,000 of them is causing concern. James Ferguson-Lees, a distinguished ornithologist, and Emma Paul, a talented artist, have produced a beautiful book about all the species at risk — beautiful, but melancholy. *Beatrix Potter or Ian Niall* are safer bets for Santa Claus.

COUNTRYSIDE
J.W.M. Thompson



"Of all hopeless things to draw, I should think the very worst is a fine fat fungus," she complained, but her work is not only scientifically exact but usually beautiful as well. The drawings are from the *Armit Library in the Lake District*, to which Potter presented them not long before her death.

She died during the last war. Soon afterwards, in the bleak and restrictive post-war years, there appeared Ian Niall's *The Poacher's Handbook*, and it was an instant best-seller. Like the Potter work, it is full of closely-observed details of the life of the countryside, but in an altogether different vein: it collected the hereditary wisdom of the ancient country fraternity of poachers, the villagers who set out by night to outwit the local gamekeeper.

The book was at once recognised as a classic of its kind, partly perhaps because its gently subversive tone matched a popular mood.

There was much more to Beatrix Potter than Peter Rabbit and her other imperishable creations might suggest. In later life, she evolved into Mrs Hoelis, a robust and tweedy figure who was a power in the world of Lakeland sheep farming. But in her pre-Peter Rabbit years, she was a shy, observant young woman in Kensington with a passionate interest in natural history; and it was to this interest that she first devoted her artistic talent.

"She had the mind of a professional scientist and biologist — which is what she undoubtedly would have been had she lived in a later age," according to the mycologist W. P. K. Findlay. The Victorian scientific establishment was exclusively male, and pompously refused to take seriously a female with pretensions to knowledge; so Potter's researches into fungi, although impressive, were snubbed or patronised at the Natural History Museum and at Kew. When she presented a learned paper to the Linnean Society it had to be read for her by a man; as a woman she was not even allowed to be present. Disappointed, paid little attention. This kind led her to move on to other things. Hence, to the general benefit, Peter Rabbit *et al.*

A Victorian Naturalist by Eileen Jay, Mary Noble and Anne Stevenson Hobbs (Warne, £25) tells the story. More important, it reproduces many of the exquisite drawings she made in her studies.

Whitakers make early impact for new team

By Jenny MacArthur

MICHAEL Whitaker brought swift reward to Everest, his new sponsor, when he and Monsanta won the Christmas Stakes on the opening day of the Olympia show jumping championships yesterday.

Whitaker, who was giving the 18-year-old Monsanta his first outing since winning the Millstreet Derby in 1990, took six weeks ago, executed two copybook turns before and after the double fence, six to finish 0.36sec ahead of James Fisher on Monterrey.

John Whitaker, who joined the Everest team with his brother, Michael, only last week, finished third on his top speed horse, Everest Fonda.

In deference to his grand age, Monsanta, the winner of the Hickstead Derby for the last two years, is now competing in fewer grands prix. "But he is very sound, and very

well," Whitaker said after his win. "So he needs to be kept going — if you drop a class horse down a peg you should have a very good speed horse."

Next year, the Irish-bred gelding, whose career winnings are second only to Milton's, will be aimed again at the Hickstead Derby. Whitaker's ride for the big grands prix — both this week and next year — will be his King George V Gold Cup winner, Everest Midnight Madness, who was second to Milton in the Paris grand prix last Sunday.

Earlier, Roger Yves Bost, of France, the winner of the Olympia grand prix last year, held off a powerful challenge by the Everest horses when he and his French-bred stallion, Raspail, won the Christmas Cracker Stakes.

Nick Skelton, one of the

seven riders who now make up the formidable Everest team, took the early lead on Major Wager. John Whitaker, on Everest Grannusch, and Geoff Luckett, on Everest Vantage, both just failed to match his time.

But Skelton's relief was short lived. Bost, 27, is an experienced rider against the clock and loves a challenge. He and Raspail swept round the twisty course to knock 0.41sec off Skelton's time.

Volvo announced yesterday that it is to sponsor the showjumping World Cup series for a further five years from April. Its total commitment to equestrianism is now more than £2 million a year.



Festive style: Geir Gallikson, of Norway, and Springbok negotiate a parallel in the Christmas Cracker Stakes at Olympia

FOOTBALL: GOULD CANCELS WEST BROMWICH ALBION VISIT AFTER POLICE ADVICE

Managers demand protection after threats from supporters

By Chris Moore

THE Football Managers' Association is to seek urgent talks with the police following the second case within the last two weeks of a manager being officially advised to stay away from his former club.

Bobby Gould, the Coventry City manager, was forced to cancel a television engagement at West Bromwich Albion on Tuesday night because of fears that his presence might have "provoked incidents" in the crowd at The Hawthorns during an FA Cup replay with Wycombe Wanderers. Gould, who was dismissed as the manager of West Bromwich at the end of last season after a stormy 18 months at the club, was due to have assisted with the match commentary for BSkyB.

Eleven days earlier, John Bond, the former Norwich

City and Manchester City manager who is now in charge of Shrewsbury Town, stayed away from the FA Cup second round tie against his old club, Burnley, at Turf Moor, following threats from some of the Lancashire club's supporters. At Tuesday night's replay at Gay Meadow, Bond sat at the back of the stand disguised as a steward so as not to be recognised by visiting spectators.

Last night, Frank Clark, the chief executive of the managers' association, accused the police of "giving in to the yobs and thugs".

"We keep saying we will not give in to the IRA, but, at the same time, the police are telling us they cannot guarantee the safety of a manager at a football match," Clark said. "This is a very worrying development and we are very concerned about it. Where will

it end? The next thing we know, fans will be picking on the opposition's star player. The game could become a farce."

Clark confirmed the matter would be discussed at the next meeting of the managers' association and also with the police, before adding: "We appreciate they have a difficult job to do. In the past, they have taken extra steps to try and ensure there are no incidents, but now it would seem they are saying 'stay away' because they do not want to risk an incident."

Gould revealed he had received a telephone call from Trevor Symmonds, the West Bromwich chairman, advising him it would "be better" if he was not allowed into the ground.

"I was absolutely disgusted at this decision and find it very hard to swallow," Gould said.

"I find it totally unacceptable that another football club manager is not allowed into a ground to do a job. I have been in this game a lifetime and wonder in what direction it is going. It is quite possible my club, Coventry, could be drawn against West Brom in this season's FA Cup."

Vic Wakeling, the executive producer of Sky Sports, confirmed: "We reluctantly took the decision to pull Bobby Gould off the game not because of what West Brom were saying, but because of the discussions we had with the police, who felt that his presence might provoke incidents in the ground."

"We're very sad to have to do this sort of thing, particularly as this is the second time in a couple of weeks that a manager has had to stay away from a game. But we have to listen to police advice."

Rangers suffer new blow

FIXTURE congestion is threatening to undermine Rangers' chase for three trophies at home and in Europe.

The postponement of yesterday's league match against their nearest challengers, Aberdeen, was the latest blow after an overnight blizzard rendered Pittodrie unplayable, but it may only be the first of many problems as they try to add the premier division title, Scottish Cup and European Cup to the Skol Cup won in October.

The Scottish League announced that the Aberdeen-Rangers game will be played on February 2 or 3. That is in addition to midweek fixtures against Dundee United and Falkirk on January 5 and 12. Rangers have already played 31 competitive games this season and only David Robertson has appeared in every match.

Apart from the league fixtures, Rangers could face five ties — excluding replays — if they successfully defend the Scottish Cup, plus fixtures with FC Bruges on March 3 and CSKA Moscow on April 21.

Brighton, of the Barclays League first division, have escaped, at least for the time being, the threat of a winding-up order being made in the High Court. Yesterday, a hearing in the Companies Court adjourned any decision on an order until February in the action brought by the Inland Revenue, who are owed £400,000 by the club.

TABLE TENNIS

ITTF imposes solvent ban to stop threat of glue sniffing

By Richard Eaton

THE increasing threat of glue sniffing has become sufficiently widespread in the sport that the game's governing body, the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), yesterday placed a ban on the vulcanising fluids so many players now use to paste bat rubber to blades at tournaments.

The decision, which will take effect on January 1 and is based on reports from experts on toxicology, according to an ITTF statement, should have a considerable effect on the nature of the game.

Players, coaches or officials who contravene the rules will be liable to immediate disqualification and suspension for at least three months. Manufacturers and suppliers have been asked by the ITTF to stop marketing adhesives

containing "aromatic and chlorinated" solvents.

Top-class attacking players paste glue on to their bats during the last few minutes before matches in order to increase the speed of the ball off the rubber. However, the health aspect is the more worrying. "I won't go near any player who is glueing up because it makes me dizzy," Jill Parker, England's former European champion, who is now manager-coach to England's women's team, said.

"I have heard that there has been glue sniffing at tournaments in this country though I can't confirm it. I have children of nine and eight who play ... and I don't feel I want to put them in an environment where they could be at risk of something like that. I am glad it is being banned."

An ITTF spokesperson said: "We have heard reports of a police raid on a shop in Japan, confiscating bats with glue giving bad side effects."

All glueing up will now have to be done in a designated area and a distinction may be made by the ITTF between ordinary glue, used to attach wood to rubber, and the solvents with aromatic and chlorinated ingredients, used to enhance playing properties, which will be banned.

The decision follows a proposal by Keith Powell, vice-chairman of the international committee of the Scottish Table Tennis Association (STTA), who is a PhD chemist. Powell had been concerned about the effects of glue since a young Scottish player was overcome by fumes at the last Scottish championships.

TENNIS

Courier and Seles champions

JIM Courier and Monica Seles were named as the official world champions by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) yesterday (Andrew Longmore writes). For the first time, the men's champion was calculated by computer rather than by choice of the three-man panel.

Unlike the Association of Tennis Professionals' ranking system, the ITF's computer programme takes into account performances in the Davis Cup, the Olympic Games, the

Grand Slam Cup and all events on the ATP tour. Though Courier damned the Grand Slam Cup as a "ill-timed, misplaced exhibition" and has been a lukewarm supporter of the Davis Cup, his victories in the Australian and French Opens in an impressive first half of the year were enough to earn the world No. 1 the accolade of world champion.

No system in the world could have deprived Seles, winner of the Australian,

French and United States Open titles and a finalist at Wimbledon, of her second world championship title, while Laurent Giammartini, of France, and Monica van den Bosch, of Holland, became world wheelchair tennis champions.

The new ITF computer is not designed as yet to calculate a year-on-year ranking, while the ATP bases its rankings on a player's best 14 results in a year, which has led to strong criticism from top players.

Premier League agrees sponsorship

JOHN Barnes, of Liverpool, will be at Stamford Bridge today to launch the Premier League's first sponsorship deal, with Lucozade, the drinks company (Louise Taylor writes).

The league's pre-season negotiations with Bass Charrington, the brewers, for title sponsorship broke down because of objections from some clubs already sponsored by beer companies.

The announcement comes a day after the Premier League club chairmen rejected a proposal from Ron Noades, of

Crystal Palace, to form a second division of their elite league. A meeting of the 22 chairmen in London heard Graham Kelly, the Football Association's chief executive, tell them that the FA was "unwilling to sanction the idea".

Kelly regards the proposal as "premature". He said: "I reminded the meeting of the unsettling effect such speculation so soon after the formation of the Premier League had on the Football League and its commercial activities. The Football League is looking

for a new sponsor when the Barclays League contract runs out at the end of this season."

"We need a period of stability, but it is a changing situation and who knows what will happen in the future. For the moment, though, let's let things bed down."

More immediately, the chairmen decided to set up a working party to explore an idea from Terry Venables, of Tottenham Hotspur, to establish an under-21 league involving all Premier League clubs.



Kelly: seeking stability

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm)	Conditions	Runs to resort	Weather	Temp	Last snow
SWITZERLAND						
Crans Montana	40-350	good	open	fine	4C	12/12
(Hard snow on most runs; 18 of 40 lifts running)						
Nendaz	210	good	open	sunny	2C	12/12
(Best skiing at Nendaz; where all lifts are operating)						
Saas Fee	60-205	good	open	sunny	0C	12/12
(Good skiing conditions; 14 lifts, 24 pistes open)						
Lanzarote	50-150	good	open	fine	-3C	10/12
(Best skiing in Rothorn; 23 of 35 lifts in operation)						
AUSTRIA						
Bad Kleineralm	30-100	good	open	fine	0C	12/12
(Only lifts operating; rest of pistes being prepared)						
Innsbruck	100	good	open	sunny	0C	12/12
(Best skiing in Axamer Lizum; 11 lifts open)						
Kaprun	20-230	good	open	fine	0C	12/12
(Pistes groomed and conditions good)						
Saalfeld	35-80	fair	open	sunny	5C	12/12
(This on lower slopes; all 60 lifts operating)						
ITALY						
Livigno	60-250	good	open	sunny	-4C	12/12
(Excellent skiing; 28 of 27 lifts operating)						
Bormio	50-180	good	open	sunny	-4C	8/12
FRANCE						
Argentiere	40-320	poor	closed	fine	2C	12/12
(Hard snow below 1,800m; three lifts, two pistes open)						
La Rosiere	120-280	good	open	cloudy	2C	8/12
(Best skiing on lower runs)						
Les Arcs	75-350	good	open	sunny	0C	12/12
(Compact on upper runs; extensive skiing on all three levels)						
SPAIN						
Formigal	26-70	good	open	fine	0C	10/12
(Good skiing on groomed pistes; 13 lifts, 18 pistes open)						
UNITED STATES						
Killington	50-100	good	open	cloudy	1C	12/12
(12 lifts in operation; serving 50 pistes)						
Vail	40-85	poor	open	snowing	-3C	18/12
(Hard-packed snow with icy patches on lower runs)						
Breckenridge	70-75	good	open	snowing	-8C	18/12
(Best skiing above middle station; ten lifts, 77 pistes open)						

Information supplied by Ski Hotline

BOXING

Schwer in search of experience

By Shrikumar Sen

BOXING CORRESPONDENT

BILLY Schwer, the British and Commonwealth lightweight champion, goes in search of experience tonight at the Wembley Grand Hall. He takes on Mauricio Acoves, a former World Boxing Organisation champion, from Mexico.

Apart from showing Schwer a few slick moves, Acoves should not be too much trouble for the Lion boxer. Having out-punched and out-boxed Carl Crook to lift the two titles, Schwer is full of the joys of boxing. The Mexican, on the other hand, at the age of 32, appears to have lost his motivation.

Acoves was knocked out in his learning years by Roger Mayweather, the American light-welterweight, but he had some stirring battles for the world title before losing it to Dingaan Thobela. Five months earlier, in a non-title bout, the South African had stopped Acoves in seven rounds. In November 1991, he received a pasting from Todd Foster, of the United States, and retired on his stool at the end of six rounds.

He has boxed only once since that bout. He knocked out Juan Hernandez, another Mexican, in two rounds four months ago. Acoves, who has lost 11 of his 39 contests, has been stopped six times. If Schwer boxes as well as he did against Crook, he should prove too aggressive for the Mexican.

CRICKET

Brawls mar South African win

FROM RICHARD STREETON IN DURBAN

AS SOUTH AFRICA clinched the one-day series with India, it became clear that it has some of the most unruly cricket crowds in the world. Serious pitch invasions, fireworks thrown about and drunken brawls marred what should have been a festive occasion at Bloemfontein on Tuesday night.

Apart from South Africa's dominance, it was also the eve of a national holiday. Known as the Day of the Vow, it commemorates Afrikaners' prayers being answered in a nineteenth century battle against the Zulus.

Security guards at the match were injured and the saddest incident came when white youths beat up three young black cricketers, who are part of the Orange Free State union's development programme.

Dr Ali Bacher, the united cricket board's managing director, conceded that the crowd's behaviour had been unacceptable and steps would be taken to ensure there was no repetition.

Previous floodlit matches, at Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Verwoerdburg, passed off without serious incident. The worst behaved crowd was at Pietermaritzburg. Even at The Wanderers, Johannesburg, on the public address system that people had been burned by fireworks went unheeded.

On pitch invasions, South Africa stand where England and Australia did some years ago before the problem was resolved by ejection from the ground and, sometimes, prosecution in court for offenders. South Africans, though, are reluctant to follow suit and

believe spectators still need educating on cricket behaviour following the long absence from international competition.

There is little doubt that, sooner or later, South Africa will have to install high-wire fences — as India, Pakistan and West Indies did several decades ago — to stop the crowd intruding.

Security has been tightened for tonight's sixth day-night international, at Kingsmead, where crowds can be as undisciplined as anywhere. It must be uncertain that the authorities will succeed in their efforts.

□ Sydney: Pakistan have agreed to use third umpires in their Test match and three one-day internationals in New Zealand which start later this month. Third umpires were introduced during India's tour of South Africa. (AP)

OLYMPIC GAMES

Major underlines his support for Games bid

By John Goodbody

THE prime minister yesterday told members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg of the British government's total support for Manchester's bid for the 2000 Olympic Games.

John Major, who was unveiling a plaque at a stand in the parliament's press centre to promote the bid, said there should be "no doubt about my commitment and the government's commitment". Although he accepted that Manchester had failed to get the 1996 Games, which were awarded to Atlanta, this time he wanted to "go for gold".

Major said that there was nowhere better to stage the event than Manchester and that the combination of facilities, transport and sporting heritage "stack up". He added that there was still a lot of work to be done and that the government would be working hard with Bob Scott, who is heading the bid.

The government has given £55 million to help build the velodrome, indoor arena and prepare the site for the main

stadium. It has also pledged further money if the 96 members of the International Olympic Committee give Manchester the Games when it votes next September.

Scott told European MPs: "There is great Olympic enthusiasm in a city that loves sport. All 25 Olympic sports are played in a region that boasts over 12,000 sports clubs. Manchester offers the world a classic Games, combining tradition and pageantry with a passion for sport."

THE TIMES

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RACING

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Setback for English

Darren Hall, the England badminton No. 1, lost 15-5, 15-6 to Joko Suprianto, of Indonesia, in the world grand prix finals in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Anders Nielsen, the English champion, also went down in straight games, to Wu Wenkai, of China.

The biggest disappointment, however, was defeat for Gillian Gowers and her Danish mixed doubles partner, Jan Paulsen, who lost 15-7, 15-3, to Jon Holst-Christensen and Grete Mogensen.

Up in smoke

Motorcycling: The 1993 French grand prix was scrapped yesterday because of the country's tough new laws on tobacco advertising. Last week the international motor racing federation cancelled the French Formula One race.

Hoppe steps up

Bobsleighbing: Wolfgang Hoppe, the double Olympic champion, ended Brian Shimer's winning streak by beating the American by 0.01sec in the World Cup four-man competition in La Plagne yesterday. Britain's first team was ninth.

Call for trio

Bowls: England have chosen three new caps, Wendy Barker, Brenda Brown and Julie Thomas, for the British women's international series at Perth from March 16 to 18. Elizabeth Read, Jayne Roylance and Elizabeth Tuhn are recalled.

Malaysia out

Hockey: Malaysia has withdrawn from the Indira Gandhi Memorial Cup in Bombay next month because of religious unrest in India. Australia have already withdrawn and Holland and England are uncertain about taking part.

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NSPCC

Football Association clears Durie of faking injury



Durie: successful appeal

BY LOUISE TAYLOR

GORDON Durie, the Tottenham Hotspur and Scotland forward, was yesterday cleared of feigning injury by the Football Association. On the same day, Ian Wright, the Arsenal and England forward, was told he faces a charge of misconduct by the FA for allegedly striking David Howells, the Tottenham midfielder player.

Durie received a three-match suspension nine weeks ago after an FA disciplinary commission found him guilty of faking injury in a Premier League match against Coventry City in August.

After apparently being head-butted by Andy Pearce, the Coventry central defender, Durie collapsed to the ground. He appealed against the ban and it was suspended.

After the appeal hearing in London, Mike Wilmore, the FA public relations manager, said: "The board of appeal, having accepted the finding of the original commission that contact may have occurred between Durie and the opposing player, concluded that Durie did not feign an injury. The appeal was upheld."

Durie, 27, was defended by Gordon Taylor, chief executive of

the Professional Footballers' Association, and Terry Venables, chief executive of Tottenham. Taylor said: "We used video evidence to press our case. It is only fair if video evidence is used to charge players that it is also entitled to support players in cases like this."

Video evidence had been viewed nine weeks ago yet was obviously looked at in a different light. Contact seemingly having been established, the case clearly hinged on the interpretation of that contact.

The original commission in October said that it had decided: "The amount of contact did not

justify Durie falling to the ground." The board yesterday refused to say why they disagreed about the degree of contact.

Durie emerged from the two-hour hearing and said: "I'm pleased it's all over." Venables said: "I'm really thrilled for Gordon because he has been suffering."

Wright, 29, appeared to punch Howells in the 66th minute of Arsenal's 1-0 defeat against Tottenham last Saturday.

Mike Wilmore, the FA public relations manager, said: "We have studied film of the incident and have written to Wright charging

him under rule 26a (x). The film shows he may have struck, or attempted to strike, an opponent."

Wright faces a lengthy ban, which could also harm his England future. He has 14 days to answer the charge but, whatever happens, he must appear.

"When a referee reports a player, the case can be dealt with by correspondence," an FA official explained. "But it is different when a charge is based on video evidence. It is only fair that Wright sees the same evidence as the members of the commission."

Alf Bullock, the referee, appeared to miss the flare-up. Howells and

Wright were still lectured by him but neither was booked.

George Graham, the Arsenal manager, said: "Ian states categorically that he did not punch the player." Yet he has hinted he may take internal club action against Wright.

Alan Gough, the Fulham goalkeeper, was yesterday charged with technical assault on a referee and banned from all football until an FA disciplinary hearing next year. He was sent off in the 3-2 Autoglass Trophy draw with Gillingham nine days ago after appearing to grab David Axcell, the referee.

Van Vossen eases Holland's fears

Turkey 1
Holland 3FROM STUART JONES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT
IN ISTANBUL

HOLLAND last night responded to the fear that they might be on the brink of going out of the next World Cup. Peter van Vossen, one of their lesser lights, eventually steered them through the driving wind, lancing sleek and clinging mud to safety.

With two goals, the historic centre forward earned them a victory that lifted them level on points with Poland and England in group two of the qualifying stages for the 1994 finals in the United States.

Turkey, though they were otherwise more than an equal match, could not apply the necessary finishing touch to their more plentiful attacks.

Holland insisted on their arrival that a new team would be built if the present representatives failed to improve on a

sluggish start. A defeat in Norway and an unconvincing draw at home against Poland had left them above only San Marino in the table.

In view of their fragile temperament, a collection of some of the most talented players in the world might have been performing together for the last time.

Koeman, Rijkaard, Gullit and van Basten will be too old to compete in the next European championship, in four years.

Van Basten was denied the opportunity to shape his destiny. The most complete centre forward in the world and the prolific leader of AC Milan's attack was withdrawn with a damaged hamstring. His place was offered to a debutant, the innocuous Viscaal.

Although Koeman operated in his usual role as sweeper, Rijkaard was reduced to acting as a central defensive marker rather than decorating the game in midfield.

Gullit, who has completed only four of Milan's games

this season, was also given a largely peripheral part to play.

Unable to consistently keep his footing on the sodden surface, he slid around on the right flank. Although he illuminated an explosive three minutes in the second half, and extended Holland's lead, it was sadly evident that his once dazzling talent is in sharp decline.

So are Holland as a whole, albeit to a lesser extent. In the foul conditions, on the shores of the Bosphorus, they were at times plodding in the wake of Turkey, who were dismissed 4-0 at Wembley last month. England's emphatic win was put in sharper perspective in front of Graham Taylor, who was here on a spying mission.

He found the result particularly disheartening. "If you picked a sequence of results, that would be the worst for us," he said. "The Dutch will be very pleased about that but how did the Turks not score three or four? Many were asking the same question."

Holland, who visit Wembley at the end of April, were considered to be favourites to claim one of the two qualifying places in group two. Instead, Norway, taking advantage of four early fixtures, have taken a substantial lead.

Turkey, showing only two changes from the side that fell under Gascoigne's spell at Wembley, displayed their improving technique in attractive build-ups, which habitually came to naught. Having scored half a dozen promising chances, they found themselves behind shortly before the hour when van Vossen evaded Hayretin and swept in his first goal.

Gullit immediately side-footed the Dutch further ahead, but the deficit was reduced almost instantly by Feyyaz, a substitute. That, though, was effectively Turkey's parting blow. Thereafter, their heads bowed to the inevitable, which was realised in the last couple of minutes by van Vossen.

Thus Holland achieved their first triumph in Turkey. England, who won 9-0 here less than a decade ago, will be returning at the end of March. At least the temperature will not be freezing and the conditions unlikely to be as appalling.

TURKEY: Hayretin; Fecof, Bulent, Gokhan, Ogun, Tugay, Salih (sub: Feyyaz), Ural (sub: Yavuz, Yilmaz, Ozur, Ozan).
HOLLAND: F. de Geay; S. Slooy, W. Jonk (sub: F. de Boer), R. Koeman, R. Viscaal, J. Wouda, A. Wiersma (sub: A. Nurmali), P. Rijkaard, P. van Vossen, R. Gullit, E. Viscaal.
Referee: K. Rothlisberger (Switzerland).



Fading talent: Rijkaard's contribution to the Dutch cause is nearing its end

Kiwomya extends Ipswich's run of home success

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

CHRIS Kiwomya, the striker whose goals at Villa Park earned Ipswich Town their replay in the Coca-Cola Cup fourth round, scored again to lead his side to a home quarter-final tie against Sheffield Wednesday in the new year. His close-range header from a corner after 57 minutes at Portman Road ended Aston Villa's interest in the cup on Tuesday night.

Kiwomya, who had been confined to bed with flu 24 hours before the replay, has scored 11 times this season. "The move was one we have worked on in training. Usually I put them way over the bar," he said. Ipswich, last beaten at home in March, by Watford, look the likelier side to progress to the semi-finals on January 5.

Looking ahead to the game against Sheffield Wednesday, Kiwomya added: "We drew 1-1 at their place not long ago in an entertaining game and we're looking forward to getting them back to our place." Villa, without their injured top scorer, Dalian Atkinson, suffered another blow when his replacement, Cyrille Regis, limped off after 15 minutes.

Wycombe Wanderers, of the GM Vauxhall Conference, matched West Bromwich Albion in every department for 82 minutes at The Hawthorns on Tuesday before their grip on a stirring FA Cup second-round replay was broken. The second division club's reward for a 1-0 victory will be a home tie against West Ham United in the new year. Bob Taylor scored the decisive goal with a

beautifully struck left-foot shot from the edge of the area.

Otherwise, the fierce commitment that helped the Conference side recover a two-goal deficit at Adams Park were on display again. Wycombe earned a standing ovation and praise from Osvaldo Ardiles, the West Bromwich manager, who said the club was still haunted by the upset defeat by Woking two seasons ago. "The tension has now gone. We will be a much different team against West Ham," he added.

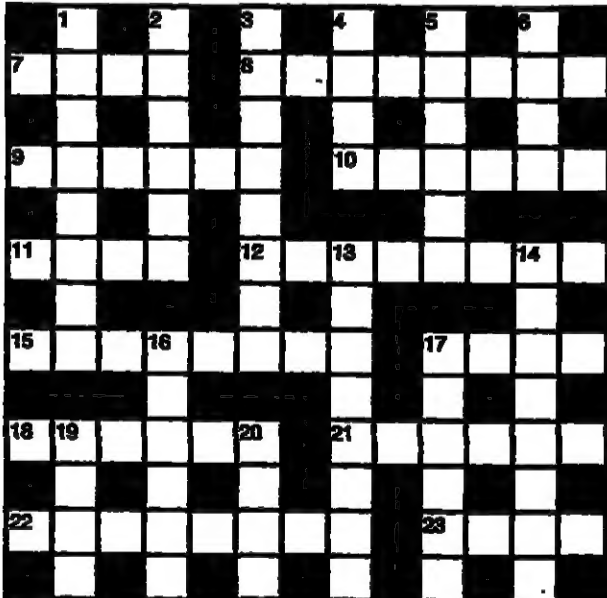
Exeter City were beaten 5-2 at home to Swansea City in an FA Cup second-round tie. The Welsh side can now savour a home match against Oxford United.

Carl Griffith's eighteenth goal of the season, in the 73rd minute at Gay Meadow, provided Shrewsbury Town with a 1-0 second-round replay lead against Burnley, who had John Deary dismissed for violent conduct.

But the Lancastrian side saved their best until last, scoring in the 87th minute through John Pender and in the 89th from Mike Conroy. Burnley go to Bramall Lane to play Sheffield United in the third round.

Financially-stricken Northampton Town ended Bath City's hopes of a giant-killing run with a 3-0 victory, and meet Rotherham United at home. Manchester United must wait until Tuesday to discover the identity of their third-round opponents. They will be either Wigan Athletic or Bury, who drew 1-1.

CONCISE CROSSWORD NO 2973



ACROSS

- 7 Disease micro-organism (4)
8 Inspect (4, 4)
9 Vote (6)
10 Shipboard (6)
11 Siney (4)
12 Counted (8)
15 Title for Frenchwomen (8)
17 Smear (4)
18 Bath biscuit (6)
21 Movement (6)
22 Ohio capital (8)
23 Lumbus (4)

DOWN

- 1 Tranquilliser (8)
2 Noisome (6)
3 Seventieth wedding anniversary (8)
4 Shield stud (4)
5 Mournful (6)
6 Chief (4)
13 Hotchpotch (8)
14 Viable (8)
16 Pious (6)
17 Fight (6)
19 Weaving frame (4)
20 Get dressed (4)

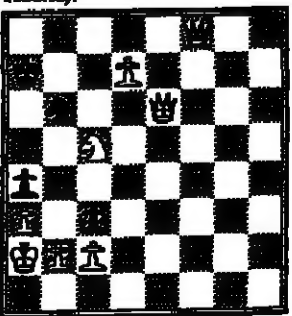
SOLUTIONS TO NO 2972

ACROSS: 1 Tip up 4 Pickled 8 Pot boiler 9 Lay 10 Rub 11 Hue and cry 12 Treat 13 Lucid 16 Uplifting 18 Mew 20 HGV 21 Overcloud 22 Dreamer 23 Latin
DOWN: 1 Taper 2 Potable 3 Prophet of doom 4 Pollen 5 Chronological 6 Linc 7 Dry-eye 12 Touched 14 Compass 15 Linear 17 Leave 19 Widen

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This position is from the game Adams - Szekely, Foreign & Colonial Hastings Challengers 1987/88. Michael Adams has matured into one of England's strongest players and has recently scored tremendous international successes. This position is from an earlier stage of his career. How can white terminate proceedings immediately? This year's Hastings tournament features the Hungarian prodigy Judit

Polgar. Further details from the British Chess Federation on 0424 442500 (Raymond Keene).



Solution on page 32.

By PHILIP HOWARD

FERAGHAN

a. A primitive flintlock

b. A Persian rug

c. A breed of dog

CARDAN

a. A short-sleeved cartigan

b. A universal joint

c. A Buddhist festival

JUKTA

a. A horse-drawn carriage

b. The Yugoslav secret police

c. A Chilean junta

HISTER

a. A half-sister

b. A beetle

c. To pester by continual hissing

Answers on page 32

Bad weather takes a heavy toll

BY BARRY PICKTHALL

THE Southern Ocean finally gave the British Steel Challenge crews a taste of how ferocious it can be yesterday and left two yachts damaged and a crewman on another with a broken collarbone.

The worst affected was British Steel II, which was left dismasted 2,300 miles west of Cape Horn midway across the Pacific. Its skipper, Richard Tudor, reported that he and his crew were sailing at eight knots close-hauled into a 30 knot westerly wind when the rigging screw tensioning the starboard lower shroud snapped. The mast broke at deck level and was ditched overboard by the crew, along with all standing rigging and sails to avoid further damage.

This was the sixth Norsman-Gibb rigging screw to break among this ten-strong fleet of identical yachts during the second stage of this race around the world. It was followed, less than an hour later, by another rigging breakage on Hofsbru Lager when her aft lower shroud also parted.

Luckily, the crew managed to save their mast. The skipper, Pete Goss, reported: "The rig seems OK, but we have been forced to tack and limp north due to heavy weather. Winds have been gusting up to 69 knots across the deck and seas are very rough."

The injured crewman was Geraint Lewis, who fell from his bunk aboard Coopers & Lybrand when the lee cloth gave way. After discussions

with doctors on Rhone-Poulenc, Commercial Union and Hofsbru Lager, his injury was identified as a broken collar bone.

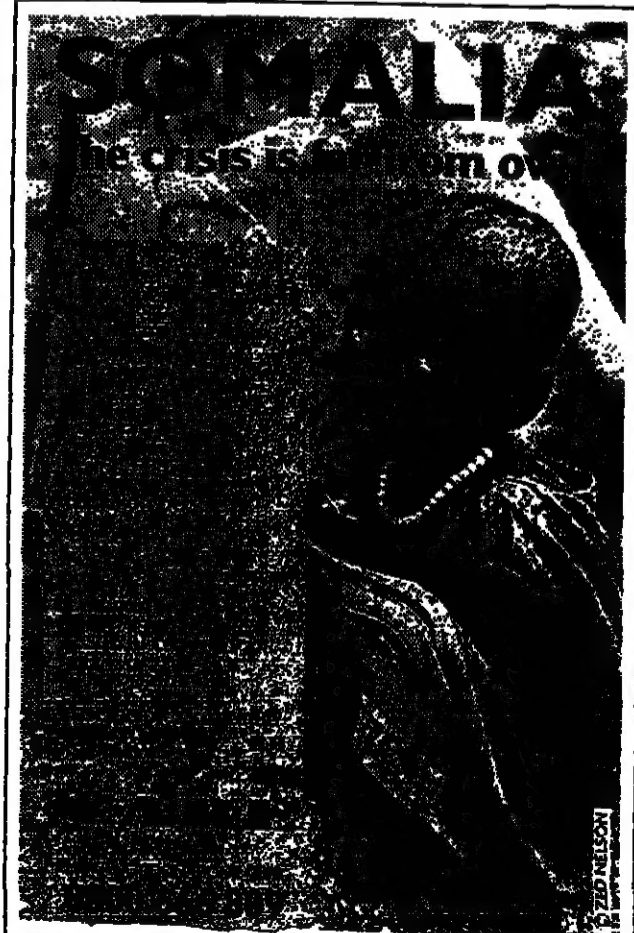
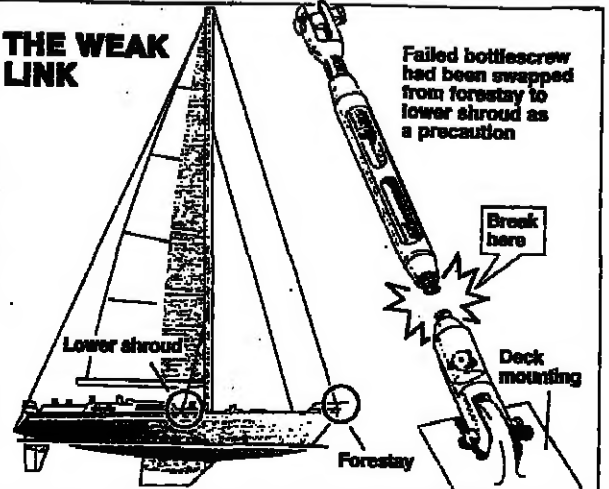
Last night, he was lying strapped up in his bunk and taking pills to relieve the pain. The irony for Tudor and his British Steel crew, who had been leading this race on elapsed time, is that they had done everything possible to avoid what their skipper described a week ago as "a

time bomb waiting to go off on each boat". They had taken the precaution of swapping the bottlescrew holding the forestay which had failed on other yachts with one attached to the lower side shroud where the loadings are far less. Unknown to them, however, the suspect screw was already close to failing and the inevitable happened yesterday at 10.15GMT.

According to Andrew Roberts, the technical director for the race, the crew has sufficient fuel to motor no more than 400-500 miles. That leaves them 2,000 miles short of Wellington, New Zealand, the closest port with facilities to fit in a new mast.

With two spinnaker poles and the main boom, the crew will be able to set up a jury rig of sorts, but the favourable trade winds are at least 700 miles to their north.

LEADING POSITIONS (at 15.00GMT yesterday, with miles to Hobart): 1. Commercial Union (P. Marlow), 3,022 miles; 2. Nuclear Electric (J. Chatterton), 3,034; 3. British Steel II (P. Tudor), 3,081; 4. Hofsbru Lager (P. Goss), 3,151; 5. Coopers & Lybrand (V. Cherry), 3,208; 6. Health Insurance (A. Doreen), 3,211; 7. Group 4 Securities (M. Goldring), 3,252; 8. Price of Tascade (P. MacGillivray), 3,358; 9. Interspace (P. Johnson), 3,524; 10. Rhone-Poulenc (P. Philip), 3,716.



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